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MANUAL OF THEOLOGY.

A TREATISE ON

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

BY

J. L. DAGG, D.D.

The doctrine which is according to godliness.—1 Tim. vi. 3.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume is designed for the use of those who have not time and opportunity to study larger works on theology. In preparing it, my aim has been to present the system of Christian doctrine with plainness and brevity; and to demonstrate, at every point, its truth, and its tendency to sanctify the heart. Men who have inclination and talent for deep research, will prefer more elaborate discussions; but if the novice in religion shall be assisted in determining what is truth, and what the proper use to be made of it, the chief end for which I have written will have been attained.

In delineating divine truth, we may exhibit it in different aspects and relations. We may view it as coming forth from God, with supreme authority; or as a system revealed by Jesus Christ, all the parts of which beautifully harmonize with each other, and cluster around the doctrine of the cross, the central point of the system; or as entering the human heart by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and transforming it into the image of God. This last view I have labored to render prominent in these pages. The moral and religious principle in man needs a suitable influence for its development and perfection; and such influence this book finds in the truths here presented. The adaptedness of a doctrine to produce this effect, it regards

as a proof of its truth and divine origin; and it accordingly deduces the articles of faith, to a great extent, from the inward exercises of piety. But this is not the only method relied on for demonstrating their truth. Other sources of religious knowledge have been examined, and especially the Bible in which the truth of God is directly made known. To this holy book, as the highest standard, the last appeal is always made; and the harmony of its decisions, with the deductions from our inward experience, is carefully observed for the confirmation of our faith. While the system has been viewed as emanating from God, and as operating on man, attention has not been directed exclusively to its origin, or its termination. The convergence of all its lines in the glorious centre, the cross of Christ, has not been overlooked. The reader will, I hope, find proof in these pages, that the doctrine of the cross is the doctrine according to godliness.

It has been no part of my design, to lead the humble inquirer into the thorny region of polemic theology. To avoid everything that has been a subject of controversy, was impossible; for every part of divine truth has been assailed. But it has been my plan to pursue our course of investigation, affected as little as possible by the strife of religious disputants, and to know no controversy, but with the unbelief of our own hearts. The questions which are most likely to perplex sincere inquirers have been examined; and, if they have not been thoroughly elucidated, and fully answered, I hope they have been so disposed of as to leave the mind at rest, peacefully reposing on truth clearly revealed, and patiently waiting for the light of eternity to dispel all remaining darkness.

In religion, men appear naturally fond of the difficult and the obscure; perhaps, because they there find escape

from the disquieting light of clearly revealed truth. Even the novice, leaving the subjects that are plain, plunges into deep investigations, and abstruse reasonings, which the skilful theologian thinks it wiser to avoid. Hence arises a necessity of frequently reminding the inquirer, that there are subjects which extend far beyond the limits of his vision; and that, in laboring to explore them further than he is guided by revelation, he is in danger of mistaking hypothesis, and the deductions of fallacious reasoning for the truth of God. Hypothesis may be lawfully admitted for the removal of objections, if it be remembered that it is only hypothesis; and abstruse reasoning must be allowed, when it becomes needful to go into its labyrinth, for the purpose of extricating those who have lost themselves therein; but, for direct proof of all the articles of faith, this book relies on express declarations of God's word, or such deductions as are adapted to plain and practical minds.

Any one who may desire to see a history of religious opinions, will not find it in this work. Religion is an affair between every man and his God; and every man should seek to know the truth for himself, whatever may be the opinions of others respecting it. It has been my aim to lead the mind of the reader directly to the sources of religious knowledge, and incite him to investigate them for himself, without respect to human authority. He may learn, from the help which I am proffering him, what my views are, but I will here give him the caution, once for all, not to adopt any opinion which I may advance, farther than it is well sustained by the word of God. Had I wished him to fix his faith on human authority, I should have adduced quotations from writers of celebrity in support of my opinions; but I have chosen not to do so. It is my desire that the reader should see, in the doctrine

here presented, so far as respects human authority, nothing but the mere opinion of a fallible worm; but that so far as it is sustained by the word of God, he should receive it as the truth of God.

This volume contains nothing respecting the externals of religion. The form of godliness is important as well as its power, and the doctrine respecting it is a component part of the Christian system; but I have been unable to include it in the present work.

If this humble attempt to benefit others should be unsuccessful, it has not been useless to myself. In the near prospect of eternity, I have found it good to examine again the foundation on which my faith rests. If the perusal of these pages give as much profit and pleasure to the reader, as the preparing of them has given to the writer, we may find reason in the future world to rejoice together, that Christian friends have called for this little service to the cause of the Redeemer.

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MANUAL OF THEOLOGY.

BOOK FIRST.

STUDY OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBLIGATION.

The study of religious truth ought to be undertaken and prosecuted from a sense of duty, and with a view to the improvement of the heart. When learned, it ought not to be laid on the shelf, as an object of speculation; but it should be deposited deep in the heart, where its sanctifying power ought to be felt. To study theology, for the purpose of gratifying curiosity, or preparing for a profession, is an abuse and profanation of what ought to be regarded as most holy. To learn things pertaining to God, merely for the sake of amusement, or secular advantage, or to gratify the mere love of knowledge, is to treat the Most High with contempt.

Our eternal interests are involved in the subject of religion, and we should study it with a view to these interests. A farmer should study agriculture, with a view to the increase of his crop; but if, instead of this he exhausts himself in inquiring how plants propagate their like, and how the different soils were originally produced, his grounds will be overrun with briers and thorns, and his barns will be empty. Equally unprofitable will be that study of religious doctrine which is directed to the mere purpose of speculation. It is as if the food necessary for the sustenance of the body, instead of being eaten and digested, were merely set out in such order as

to gratify the sight. In this case, the body would certainly perish with hunger; and, with equal certainty will the soul famish if it feed not on divine truth.

When religious doctrine is regarded merely as an object of speculation, the mind is not content with the simple truth as it is in Jesus, but wanders after unprofitable questions, and becomes entangled in difficulties, from which it is unable to extricate itself. Hence arises the skepticism of many. Truth, which would sanctify and save the soul, they wilfully reject, because it will not gratify all their curiosity, and solve all their perplexities. They act as the husbandman would, who should reject the whole science of agriculture, and refuse to cultivate his grounds, because there are many mysteries in the growth of plants, which he cannot explain.

If we set out, in our search for religious truth, from a sense of duty, and with the purpose of making the best possible use of it, we may hope for success. The Lord will bless our efforts; for he has promised, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."[1] As we advance, we shall find out all that is necessary for any practical purpose; and the sense of duty, under which we proceed, will not drive us beyond this point.

The sense of religious obligation which moves us to seek the knowledge of the truth, though disregarded by a large part of mankind, belongs to the constitution of human nature. Man was originally designed for religion, as certainly as the eye was formed for the purpose of vision. It will be advantageous to consider well this fact, at the outset of our inquiries. We shall then feel that we are proceeding according to the best dictates of human nature.

The various parts of the world which we inhabit, are admirably adapted to each other. Many of these adaptations present themselves to our most careless observation; and, if we search for them with diligence, they multiply to our view beyond number. The seed falls to the ground from its parent stalk, like a grain of sand; but, unlike the sand, it contains in its minute dimensions, a wonderful provision for the production of a future plant. This provision, however, would prove unavailing, if it did not find a soil adapted to give nourishment to the young germ. Moisture is also needed: and the vapor, rising from a distant sea, is wafted to the

[1] John vii. 17.

place by the wind, and, condensed in the atmosphere, descends in the fertilizing shower. But all these adaptations are insufficient, if warmth is not supplied; and, to complete the process, the sun, at the distance of ninety-five millions of miles, sends forth his enlivening beams. Such complications of arrangements abound in all the works of nature.

The purposes which these adaptations accomplish, are often perfectly obvious. In plants and animals, they provide for the life of the individual and the continuance of the species. Plants are adapted to become food for animals; and plants and animals render important benefit to man. But man, too, has his adaptations; and, from a consideration of these, his proper place in the great system of the universe may be inferred.

Like other animals, man is so constituted, that provision is made for the continuance of his life, and of the race. Were there no higher indications in his constitution, he might eat and drink, like other animals; and the indulgence of his natural appetites and propensities might be the highest end of his being. But, for human beings so to brutalize themselves, is a manifest degradation of their nature. They possess endowments, which, as every one feels, fit them for far nobler purposes.

The high intellectual powers of man, call for appropriate exercise. His knowledge is not confined to objects near at hand, nor to such relations and properties of things as are immediately perceived by the senses; but his reason traces remote relations, and follows the chain of cause and effect through long successions. From the present moment he looks back through past history, and connects events in their proper order of dependence. By his knowledge of the past he is able to anticipate and prepare for the future. In the causes now existing, he can discover the effects which will be developed long hereafter. Such endowments agree well with the opinion that he is an immortal being, and that the present transitory life is preparatory to another which will never end; but they, by no means, accord with the supposition, that he dies as the brute. No one imagines that the ox, or the ass, is concerned with the question whether an immortality awaits him, for which it is important that he should prepare; but the idea of a future state has had a place in the human mind in all ages, and under all forms of religion. The bee and the ant provide for

the approaching winter; and the winter, for which their instincts lead them to prepare, comes upon them. If the future life, which men have so generally looked for, which their minds are so fitted to expect, and for which many have labored to prepare, with unceasing care, should never be realized, the case would violate all analogy, and be discordant with the harmony of universal nature.

The human mind is fitted for continued progress in knowledge; and, therefore, for a state of immortality. This adaptation includes an insatiable desire of knowledge, and an ability to acquire it. The little chicken, not many hours after it has left the shell in which its feeble existence commenced, is able to select its food, to roam abroad in search of it, and to return to its mother's wing for protection. Man is born into the world, the most helpless of animals. Tedious weeks pass away before the development of his intellectual powers begins to appear. The progress is slow, and many months of gradual improvement pass, before he becomes equal in ability for self-preservation, to many other creatures that have lived a few hours. These animals, however, stop at a point beyond which, it may be said, they never go. The birds of the present age build their nests just as they were built five thousand years ago; and the admirable social arrangements found among bees and ants have undergone no improvement. But no point, no line, bounds the progress of the human mind. Though we are now familiar with the great improvements which have been made in arts and sciences, we contemplate them with admiration and astonishment; and we feel that a boundless career is open before the intellect of man, inviting the efforts which he finds himself internally prompted to make. But, as far as each individual of the race is concerned, the vast fields of knowledge open before him in vain, his power to explore them exists in vain, and the desire to explore burns in vain in his breast, if the present life, which flies as the weaver's shuttle, is the only opportunity granted, and if all his hopes and aspirations are to be forever buried in the grave.

The moral faculties with which man is endowed, adapt him to a state of subjection to moral government. Our minds are so constituted, that we are capable of perceiving a moral quality in actions, and of approving or disapproving them. A consciousness of having done what is right, affords us one of our highest pleasures; and the anguish of remorse for evil deeds, is as intolerable

as any suffering of which the human heart is susceptible. Our conscience exercises a moral government within us, and rewards or punishes us for actions according to their moral character. Much of our happiness depends on the approbation of those with whom we associate. Hence, we find moral government without, as well as within; and at every point, in our relations to intelligent beings, we feel its restraints. Where are the bounds of this moral government? It must be as extensive as our relations to moral beings, and as lasting as our existence.

That men are immortal and under a moral government, by which their future state will be made happy or miserable, according to their conduct in the present life, are fundamental truths of religion. Man is a religious animal; because a persuasion of his immortality and an expectation of future retribution so readily find a place in his mind. No one imagines that such thoughts were ever entertained for a moment, by any one of the innumerable brute animals that have trodden the earth. But in the human race, such thoughts have been prevalent in all nations and ages; have mingled with the cogitations of the learned and the unlearned, the wise and the unwise; and have blended religion thoroughly with the history of mankind.

The considerations which have been presented, establish the claim of religious truth to our highest respect and most diligent investigation. He who disregards its claim acts contrary to his own nature, and degrades himself to the level of the beast that perishes. That men do so degrade themselves, is a fact which correct views of religious truth cannot overlook: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."[1] It is a peculiar glory and excellence of the Christian revelation, that it is adapted to this fallen condition of mankind; and that it has power to effect a restoration. It is medicine for the sick, as well as food for the healthy. A healthy appetite calls for food; and the food, when received, administers needed nourishment; so that between the healthy stomach and the nutritious food, the adaptation is reciprocal. But in sickness the stomach loathes food, and rejects the medicine which is needed to effect a cure: yet the adaptation of the medicine to the

[1] Is. i. 3.

condition of the sick man still remains. Just so it is with respect to the gospel of Christ. Though rejected by men, it is "worthy of all acceptation," because it is a remedy, precisely adapted to our depraved state. Thousands of thousands have experienced its restoring power, and unite in recommending its efficacy to the multitudes who are unwilling to make trial of it.

In contemplating the truths of religion, we may view them in various aspects. We may consider them as proceeding from God; as demonstrated by abundant proof; as harmonizing with one another; and as tending to the glory of God. It is interesting and instructive to view them in immediate contact with the human heart, and, like the Spirit of God, brooding over the original chaos, bringing order out of confusion, and infusing light and life where darkness and death had previously reigned. In exerting this new-creating power, the divinity of Christian truth appears; and the demonstration of it is the more satisfactory, because practical, and leveled to the capacity of all.

As religious beings, let us seek to understand the truths of religion. As immortal beings, let us strive to make ourselves acquainted with the doctrine on which our everlasting happiness depends. And let us be careful that we do not merely receive it coldly into our understandings, but that its renewing power is ever operative in our hearts.

CHAPTER II.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE.

We find ourselves in a world where we have no continuing abode. Within us, and without us, we have proofs and admonitions that our chief interests lie in another world, and that our chief business in this is to prepare for the future state, into which we shall very soon enter. We need information respecting that unseen world and the right method of preparing for it, and no other knowledge can be so important to us as this. Can it be that we have no means of acquiring it? For our guidance in the things of this

world, every necessary provision has been made. We possess eyes; and the world in which we are placed affords the light that is needed to render them useful in directing our steps. We possess understanding; and means of knowledge from without are presented, by which we may select the objects of our pursuit, and the best methods of gaining them. We may hence infer that some means of knowledge respecting our highest interests must exist. The sources from which this knowledge may be obtained, are the following:

1. *Our moral and religious feelings.*—Brute animals have instincts by which they are guided; and in man, also, instinctive propensities exist, adapted to his nature and the condition and circumstances of his being. Maternal affection is not confined to brutes as an instinct peculiar to them, but it is found in the highest degree in the human mother; and in her breast, mingles with moral and religious feelings peculiar to human nature and inseparable from it. The human mother feels the moral obligation to take care of her child, antecedent to all reasoning on the subject. When we determine what is right or wrong by a process of reasoning, we judge according to some law, or rule of right; but, in this case, the mother is a law to herself. She needs no teaching from without, to inform her that it is her duty to take care of her offspring. Sin may so debase human nature, that mothers may be without natural affection—and such mothers may evince no moral feeling; but, however it may be buried under our corruptions, the moral principle is an element of our nature. Because of it, even the heathen are a law unto themselves, and show the work of the law written in their hearts. The moral feeling which at first co-operates with the mother's instinctive affection to induce her to take care of her child, co-operates afterwards with her reason in devising the best method of promoting its good.

When it was to be determined which of two women was the mother of a living child claimed by both, the wisdom of Solomon decided, that the maternal relation existed where maternal affection existed. On the same principle we may, from our moral and religious feelings, infer our relation to moral government and to the Supreme Ruler. From this law, written in the heart, we might obtain much religious knowledge, if the fall of man had not obscured the writing.

2. *The moral and religious feelings of our fellow-men.*—We are formed for society, and are capable of benefiting each other in the things of this life, and of that which is to come. The judgments of others assist our judgments; and their moral and religious feelings may, in like manner, assist ours. In the approbation or disapprobation of mankind, we may find an important means of knowing what is right or wrong. Hence, it is a rule of duty to do those things which are "of good report."

If an ancient writing is transmitted to us in numerous copies, all of which are mutilated and greatly effaced, the probability of ascertaining what the original was is far greater, when we compare many copies with each other, than it would be, if we possessed one copy only. For the same reason, the moral and religious feeling of mankind generally, is a source of knowledge more to be relied on, than that which is opened for our examination in the moral nature of a single individual. A hardened transgressor's own conscience may fail to reprove him, when his crimes shock the moral sense of the whole community; and, from their disapprobation, he might learn the iniquity of his conduct, though all moral feeling were extinguished in his own breast.

In examining this second source of knowledge, we observe the common consent of mankind, that there is a God; that he ought to be worshipped; that there is a difference between virtue and vice; that a moral government exists, which is partly administered in this life by Divine Providence; that the soul of man is immortal; and that a future retribution awaits all men after death. These truths of religion appear in the history of mankind, through all the corruptions which have covered and obscured them.

3. *The course of Nature.*—Things are so arranged by the Creator and Ruler of the world, that some actions tend to promote, and others to destroy, the happiness of the individual and of society. By observing the tendency of actions, we may learn what to do and what to avoid. God has established the nature of things, and the voice of Nature is the voice of God. Conscience is God speaking within us, but, because of man's apostasy from God, it often delivers false oracles. Hence, we do well to turn our ear to the voice of God, speaking in universal Nature.

The tendency of vice to produce misery, is obvious to every one who observes the course of things around him. Drunkards and

gamblers impoverish themselves, ruin their families, waste their health, and bring themselves to an untimely grave, not unfrequently by violent, and sometimes by suicidal hands. In ten thousand ways, crime of every species exhibits its pernicious tendency, and, in this arrangement of things, the moral government of God is clearly seen, and the conduct which he approves, is pointed out by the finger of his Providence. Enough of God's moral government appears in the present life, to demonstrate its existence; and the imperfection which is manifest in its present administration, furnishes satisfactory proof that it extends beyond the present life, and is perfected in the world to come.

The religious knowledge which may be obtained from the three sources which have been enumerated, constitutes what is called Natural Religion. Though insufficient to meet the wants of man in his fallen condition, it teaches the fundamental truths on which all religion is based, and leads to the higher source of knowledge by which we may become wise to salvation. This is

4. *Divine Revelation.*—Because all other means of knowledge are insufficient to bring men to holiness and happiness, God has been pleased, in pity to our race, to make known his will by special revelation. Besides his voice in conscience and in Nature, he utters his voice from heaven. This revelation was anciently made by prophets, who were commissioned to speak to men in his name, and afterwards by his Son from heaven. To us, in these latter days, he speaks in his written word, the Bible, which is the perfect source of religious knowledge, and the infallible standard of religious truth.

The Bible consists of two parts:—1. The Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures. This is the book very carefully preserved by the Jews throughout the world, and held sacred by them as a revelation from God. 2. The New Testament. This consists of various writings, which have been carefully preserved by the Christians of past ages, and are now regarded by them as a revelation from God, made through the immediate followers of Jesus Christ.

We shall here assume that the Bible is a revelation from God. If the reader has any doubt on this point, he may study, to advantage, any of the numerous works extant on the Evidences of Christianity; or, in the absence of more elaborate productions, he may read a small tract by the Author, entitled, The Origin and

Authority of the Bible. [This Tract has been introduced into the present work as an Appendix, pp. 26–42.]

Inspiration and transmission of the Scriptures.—The Bible, though a revelation from God, does not come immediately from him to us who read it, but is received through the medium of human agency. It is an important question, whether its truth and authority are impaired by passing through this medium. Human agency was employed in the first writing of the Scriptures, and afterwards in transmitting them, by means of copies and translations, to distant places, and succeeding generations.

The men who originally wrote the Holy Scriptures, performed the work under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Such was the extent of this influence, that the writing, when it came forth from their hands, was said to be given by inspiration of God. So Paul said, with special reference to the Old Testament: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."[1] Though Moses and the prophets executed the writing, it is said to have been given by God, and the perfection attributed to it demonstrates that it had not suffered by the instrumentality which he had chosen to employ. Christ referred to the Hebrew Scriptures, as the word of God.[2] Paul represents what was spoken by the prophets, as spoken by God.[3] Peter attributes to the writings of Paul equal authority with that of the Old Testament Scriptures.[4] Paul also claims equal authority for what he spoke and wrote.[5] Christ promised to his apostles, after his departure, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and described the effect of his influence on them in these words: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your father which speaketh in you."[6] This gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost; and their possession of it was proved by their power to speak with tongues, and work miracles. From all this, we learn that what was spoken and written by inspiration, came with as high authority as if it had proceeded from God without the use of human instrumentality. When Peter said to the lame man, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up, and walk,"[7] the voice which spoke was Peter's, but the

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[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. [2] Mark vii. 13. [3] Heb. i. 1. [4] 2 Peter iii. 16.
[5] 1 Cor. xiv. 37; 1 Thess. iii. 10. [6] Matt. x. 20. [7] Acts iii. 6.

power which restored the ankle bones, was God's. The words, though Peter's, were spoken under divine influence, or the divine power would not have accompanied them. So the gospel, received from the lips of the apostles, was received, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God."[1] The men who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, were the instruments that God used to speak and write his word. Their peculiarities of thought, feeling, and style, had no more effect to prevent what they spoke and wrote from being the word of God, than their peculiarities of voice or of chirography.

The question, whether inspiration extended to the very words of revelation, as well as to the thoughts and reasonings, is answered by Paul: "We preach, not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."[2] The thoughts and reasonings in the minds of the inspired writers, were not a revelation to others until they were expressed in words; and if the Holy Spirit's influence ceased before expression was given to these thoughts and reasonings, he has not made a revelation to mankind. On this supposition, we cannot read the Bible as the word of God, but as the word of men; of good and honest men, it is true, but nevertheless of fallible men. The opinion that the expression is merely human, undermines the confidence with which the word of God deserves to be regarded; because we know not when, or how far, that expression may fail to convey the meaning of the Holy Spirit. It can no longer be said, that the Scriptures are "a more sure word of prophecy,"[3] that "they cannot be broken,"[4] and that the things *written* "are the commandments of the Lord."[5]

The doctrine of plenary inspiration, if properly understood, does not imply that the Holy Spirit employed the writer as an unconscious instrument. It maintains that his memory, and other mental powers, were employed in the execution of the work, as truly as his hand; but it insists that the latter was as certainly controlled by the unerring guide as the former. Nor does the doctrine imply, that the Holy Spirit is the original author of every word contained in the sacred volume. It records the speeches of Satan, and of the Orator Tertullus, and records them faithfully; but the Holy Spirit was not the author of these speeches.

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[1] 1 Thess. ii. 13. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 13. [3] 2 Peter i. 19.
[4] John x. 35. [5] 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

In 1 Cor. ch. 7, Paul distinguishes between what he delivered, as a commandment of the Lord, and what he spoke without such commandment. It may appear, at first view, that he disclaims inspiration with regard to the things of the last kind. But if it be admitted, that these things were matters of human advice without divine authority, it does not follow, that the writing which contains his advice, is uninspired. The inspired word which records the speeches of Satan and Tertullus, may record the prudent counsel of a wise apostle, even when that counsel does not come with the full sanction of divine authority. But, in giving this counsel, Paul says, "I think that I have the Spirit of God," v. 40; and, if he thought that he gave it by the Spirit, it would be rash in us to think otherwise. We are not to understand the word "think," as implying doubt in Paul's mind, and we need have no doubt that the counsel which he gave, was by the wisdom from above.

Although the Scriptures were originally penned under the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit, it does not follow, that a continued miracle has been wrought to preserve them from all error in transcribing. On the contrary, we know that manuscripts differ from each other; and where readings are various, but one of them can be correct. A miracle was needed in the original production of the Scriptures; and, accordingly, a miracle was wrought; but the preservation of the inspired word, in as much perfection as was necessary to answer the purpose for which it was given, did not require a miracle, and accordingly it was committed to the providence of God. Yet the providence which has preserved the divine oracles, has been special and remarkable. They were at first committed to the Jews, who exercised the utmost care in their preservation and correct transmission. After the Christian Scriptures were added, manuscript copies were greatly multiplied; many versions were prepared in other languages; innumerable quotations were made by the early fathers; and sects arose which, in their controversies with each other, appealed to the sacred writings, and guarded their purity with incessant vigilance. The consequence is, that, although the various readings found in the existing manuscripts, are numerous, we are able, in every case, to determine the correct reading, so far as is necessary for the establishment of our faith, or the direction of our practice in every important particular. So little, after all, do the copies differ from each other, that these

minute differences, when viewed in contrast with their general agreement, render the fact of that agreement the more impressive, and may be said to serve practically, rather to increase, than impair our confidence in their general correctness. Their utmost deviations do not change the direction of the line of truth; and if they seem in some points to widen that line a very little, the path that lies between their widest boundaries, is too narrow to permit us to stray. As copies of the Holy Scriptures, though made by fallible hands, are sufficient for our guidance in the study of divine truth; so translations, though made with uninspired human skill, are sufficient for those who have not access to the inspired original. Unlearned men will not be held accountable for a degree of light beyond what is granted to them; and the benevolence of God in making revelation, has not endowed all with the gift of interpreting tongues. When this gift was miraculously bestowed in ancient times, it was for the edification of all: and now, when conferred in the ordinary course of providence, the purpose of conferring it is the same. God has seen it wiser and better to leave the members of Christ to feel the necessity of mutual sympathy and dependence, than to bestow every gift on every individual. He has bestowed the knowledge necessary for the translation of his word on a sufficient number of faithful men, to answer the purpose of his benevolence; and the least accurate of the translations with which the common people are favored, is full of divine truth, and able to make wise to salvation.

A full conviction that the Bible is the word of God, is necessary to give us confidence in its teachings, and respect for its decisions. With this conviction pervading the mind when we read the sacred pages, we realize that God is speaking to us, and when we feel the truth take hold of our hearts, we know that it is God with whom we have to do. When we study its precepts, all our powers bow to them, as the undoubted will of our sovereign Lord; and when we are cheered and sustained by its consolations, we receive them as blessings poured down from the eternal throne. Nature and science offer no light that can guide us in our search for immortal bliss; but God has given us the Bible, as a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path. Let us receive the gift with gratitude and commit ourselves to its guidance.

APPENDIX.

Origin and Authority of the Bible.

I. ORIGIN.

We are rational beings; and, as such, the desire of knowledge is natural to us. In early childhood, as each new object of interest comes under our notice, we ask, who made it; and as we advance in years, the same inquisitiveness attends us, and prompts us to investigate the sources of knowledge which are ever opening before us. Brutes may look with indifference on the works of God, and tread under foot the productions of human ingenuity, without inquiry into their origin; but rational men cannot act thus without violence to the first principles of their nature. Among the objects which have occupied a large space in human thought, and which claim our consideration, the Bible stands conspicuous. Its antiquity; the veneration in which it has been held, and continues to be held, by a large part of mankind; and the influence which it has manifestly exerted on their conduct and happiness, are sufficient, if not to awaken higher emotions, at least to attract our curiosity, and excite a desire to know its origin and true character.

We are moral beings. The Bible comes to us as a rule of conduct. The claim which is set up for it is, that it is the highest standard of morals, admitting no appeal from its decisions. We are, therefore, under the strongest obligations to examine the foundation of this claim.

We are, if the Bible is true, immortal beings. Heathen philosophers have conjectured that man may be immortal; and infidels have professed to believe it; but, if we exclude the Bible, we have no means of certain knowledge on this point. Yet it is a matter of the utmost importance. If we are immortal, we have interests beyond the grave which infinitely transcend all our interests in the present life. What folly, then, it is, to reject the only source of information on this momentous subject! Besides, if we have such interests in a future world, we have no means of knowing how to secure them, except from the Bible. Shall we throw this book from us, and trust to vain conjecture, on questions in which our all is involved? it would be folly and madness.

Let us then inquire, whence came the Bible? Is it from heaven,

or from men? If it is from men, is it the work of good men, or of bad men?

If bad men had been the authors of the Bible, they would have made it to their liking. If made to please them, it would please other men of like character. But it is not a book in which bad men delight. They hate it. Its precepts are too holy; its doctrines too pure; its denunciations against all manner of iniquity too terrible. It is not at all written according to the taste of such men. There are men who prize the Bible; who pore over its pages with delight; who have recourse to it in all their perplexities and sorrows; who seek its counsels to guide them, and its instructions to make them wise; who esteem its words more than gold, and feast on them as their sweetest food. But who are these men? They are those who detest all deceit and falsehood, and whom this very book has transformed, from men of iniquity and vice, to men of purity and holiness. It is impossible, therefore, that the Bible should be the work of bad men.

It remains that the Bible must be either from heaven or from good men. So pure a stream cannot proceed from a corrupt fountain. If it be from good men, they will not wilfully deceive us. Let us, then, look to the account which they have given of its origin: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."[1] "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."[2] "And so we have the prophetic word more firm, to which ye do well to take heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the morning star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private invention. For never, at any time, was prophecy brought by the will of man, but the holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost."[3]

It may, perhaps, be objected to the use of these quotations, that we permit the Bible to speak for itself; but this is no unprecedented procedure. If a stranger were passing through our neighborhood, and we were desirous to know whence he came, it would not be unnatural to propose the inquiry to the man himself. If there were about him marks of honesty and simplicity of character, and if, after our most careful investigations, it should appear that

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[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 37.
[3] 2 Peter i. 19, 20, 21; *Macknight's Translation.*

he has no evil design to accomplish, and no interest to promote by deceiving us, we should rely on the information we derive from him. Such a stranger is the Bible; and why may we not rely on its testimony concerning itself? Nay, it is not a stranger. Though claiming a heavenly origin, it has long dwelt on earth, and gone in and out among us, a familiar companion. We have been accustomed to hear its words; and have known them to be tried with every suspicion, and every scrutiny, and no falsehood has been detected. More, it has been among us as a teacher of truth and sincerity; and truth and sincerity have abounded just in proportion as its teachings have been heeded. Old men of deceit have shrunk from its probings, and trembled at its threatenings; and young men have been taught by it to put away all lying and hypocrisy. Can it be that the Bible itself is a deceiver and impostor? Impossible! It must be, what it claims to be, a book from heaven — the Book of God.

The truth that the Bible is from God, is not only testified by the inspired men who wrote it, but it is established by many other decisive proofs, some of which we shall proceed to consider.

The Divine origin of the Bible is proved by the CHARACTER OF THE REVELATION which it contains.

The *character of God*, as exhibited in the Bible, cannot be of human origin. We know what sort of gods men make; for they have multiplied them without number. They carve deities from blocks of wood and stone, and worship them with stupid adoration; but this is not the most debasing and abominable idolatry of which they are guilty. Their vain imaginations fashion gods more vile than these. The blocks of wood or stone may take the form of birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things; but the deities which derive their origin from the imaginations of men have passions and propensities that are beastly, and even worse than beastly. Such are the objects which they worship with laborious and costly devotion. Let any man visit the temples of the heathen, observe their horrid ceremonies, and study the character of their gods; and then let him say whether these gods, and the God of the Bible, are from one common origin.

Some objectors may allege that the deities to which we have referred are those of uncivilized tribes. What then? Were the gods of the most civilized nations better than these? What were

the divinities which were worshipped by the ancient Greeks and Romans, even by their sages and philosophers, whose talents and genius have been admired in every age? Jupiter, their Optimus Maximus, best and greatest, was a monster of crime; and Venus, Bacchus, Mercury, Mars, and the rest of their deities, were his fit companions. They were patrons and examples of vice. The infidel Rousseau has drawn their character correctly. "Cast your eyes over all the nations of the world, and all the histories of nations. Amid so many inhuman and absurd superstitions, amid that prodigious diversity of manners and characters, you will find every where the same principles and distinctions of moral good and evil. The paganism of the ancient world produced, indeed, abominable gods, who on earth would have been shunned or punished as monsters, and who offered as a picture of supreme happiness only crimes to commit and passions to satiate. But vice, armed with this sacred authority, descended in vain from the eternal abode; she found, in the heart of man, a moral instinct to repel her. The continence of Xenocrates was admired by those who celebrated the debaucheries of Jupiter — the chaste Lucretia adored the unchaste Venus—the most intrepid Roman sacrificed to Fear. He invoked the god who dethroned his father, and he died without a murmur by the hand of his own. The most contemptible divinities were served by the greatest men. The holy voice of Nature, stronger than that of the gods, made itself heard, and respected, and obeyed on earth, and seemed to banish as it were to the confinement of heaven, guilt, and the guilty."[1]

Go now to the Pantheon, and study the character and works of Rome's innumerable deities. After infidelity has acknowledged that they are monsters, more vicious than men, and sending forth a corrupting influence into human society, invite her to study the character of Jehovah, the God of the Bible, a Spirit, whose form cannot be represented; a Being whose eyes cannot behold iniquity, who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, and doing wonders; and who requires to be worshipped in the beauty of holiness. Let her stand with Moses in the cleft of the rock, and hear the Lord proclaim his name: "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping

[1] Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. iii. p. 138.

mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."[1] Surely she will bow her head with reverence, and confess, *this is the voice of God.*

The account of the *life and character of Christ* given in the gospels, is not a fiction of human invention. The introduction of Christianity, its existence in the world, the persecutions which it has encountered, its spread in spite of opposition, and the influence which it has exerted on nations and governments, are all so interwoven with the history of the last eighteen hundred years, that all history must be doubted, if these are fables. The evidence that there were such men as Alexander and Julius Cæsar, is not so abundant and indisputable as that Jesus Christ appeared at the time and place stated in the gospels. The accounts of his life, sufferings, and death, given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, come down to us with all the marks of authentic history. No signs of fraud can be detected in the narratives. The admirable simplicity of the writers, their ingenuousness in relating the faults and weaknesses of their own characters, their artlessness in depicting the sublime virtues of their Master, and recording his stupendous works, and the unimpassioned manner in which they described the cruel treatment he received from his persecutors and murderers; all these considerations place the truth of their narratives beyond question. Add to all this, that they had sufficient means of knowing the truth of the facts which they have recorded; that they attested the sincerity of their faith in them by enduring tortures and death; and that those who received their testimony, and transmitted it to us, testified their faith in it by like endurance. No other facts in the history of the world have evidence so strong. But if this evidence can be rejected, an insuperable difficulty still remains. It is impossible to account for the existence of the gospels on any other supposition, than that they are what they profess to be, true delineations of a real character. The authors were incapable of conceiving such a fiction. Even such men as Virgil and Homer were incapable of such an effort. They could conceive and describe such characters as Æneas and Ulysses, but not such a character as Jesus Christ. Besides, the learning of the world

[1] Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.

was arrayed against Christianity; and to the unlearned and humble fishermen of Galilee the task was assigned of recording the life and works of Jesus of Nazareth. That such men should have transmitted to succeeding ages a fiction such as this, is incredible — impossible. Another quotation from Rousseau will show the overpowering influence of these considerations on the mind of an infidel: "I will confess to you further, that the majesty of the Scripture strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction—how mean—how contemptible — are they, compared with the Scripture! Is it possible, that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history it contains should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the air of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind! What subtilty. What truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and die, without weakness and without ostentation? Shall we suppose the Evangelic History a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction. On the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospels; the marks of whose truth are so striking and invincible, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."[1]

If the gospels give a true account of Jesus Christ, he was a teacher from heaven; and both the doctrine which he taught, and the Scriptures, to which he often appealed as of divine authority, are from God.

The *method of salvation* revealed in the Bible is not a human device. The preaching of Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, yet salvation by the Cross is the grand peculiarity of the gospel. Were Christianity

[1] Fuller's Works, vol. ii. p. 69.

a cunningly-devised fable, a doctrine so offensive to mankind would not have been made prominent in the scheme. To this day, men of proud intellect and corrupt heart reject the doctrine of salvation by the obedience and sufferings of another. To the humble and contrite, oppressed with a sense of sin, and seeking, from the borders of despair, some divine method of escape from the wrath to come, this doctrine is thrice welcome; but the humble and contrite are not the men to cheat the world with a forged system of religion.

The BLESSINGS which the Bible confers on mankind have their origin in infinite Benevolence.

Compare the condition of those nations where Paganism reigns, with that of the nations where the most corrupt forms of Christianity exist, and you will find the latter preferable. Institute another comparison between these, and the lands where a purer Christianity prevails, and where the Bible, instead of being withheld from the common people, is open to the reading of all, and you will perceive a far better state of human society, where the Sacred Volume is best known. Compare, again, in these most favored lands, the families where the Bible is least regarded, with those in which its doctrines are revered and its precepts obeyed, and you will be sensible that a heavenly influence pervades the latter. But even in such families as these, the individual members often differ widely from each other. Though they may all worship at the same altar, and read the same Bible, some have the word of truth on their lips only, while others treasure it up deep in their hearts, and find it sweeter to their taste than honey and the honeycomb. What elevation of character, what pure and unsullied bliss do the latter enjoy! Take, lastly, an individual of the last most favored class, and compare the different moments of his life—those in which the Bible is least regarded, with those in which he feasts on its truths and promises, and experiences joy unspeakable and full of glory, while he receives the divine word into his heart; and you will have a full view of the blessed influence which the Bible can impart. We know that the sun is a source of light and heat, because all is dark and cold when his beams are absent; and light and heat are found to increase in proportion as we draw nearer to him. Precisely so it is with the Bible. From Paganism, cold and dark, where the Bible is unknown, to the saint in his most rapturous devotions, when he has the sweetest foretaste of heaven which

mortals on earth can enjoy; the light of truth which fills the understanding, and the warmth of love which glows in the heart, bear an exact proportion to the proximity of the Bible. If the sun, which enlightens the material world, is the work of a benevolent Creator, much more may we ascribe to the same benevolence the authorship of the Bible, the source of spiritual illumination.

Having compared the Bible to the sun, it may be a fit occasion to remark that both these lights have their darknesses — the Bible its obscurities, and the sun its spots. The Deist may cavil at the one, and the Atheist at the other; but the cavils of both are alike absurd and unavailing. Because there are spots in the sun, shall we conclude that God did not make it, or that it is not a blessing to mankind? Yet this conclusion would not be more irrational than to deny that God is the author of the Bible, or that the Bible is a blessing to the world, because there are obscurities found in its pages. Suppose it be admitted that the spots in the sun, and the obscurities in the Bible are imperfections, is God the author of nothing in which imperfections exist? If everything material, and everything human, be marked with imperfection, may not God nevertheless glorify himself by things material and human? The new Jerusalem has no need of a material sun to enlighten it, because the glory of God and the Lamb is the light thereof; but God has fixed the sun in the firmament to enlighten this world of matter; and the sun in the firmament, notwithstanding its spots, declares its Maker's glory. So God may make revelation of Himself to the pure intelligences of heaven in language free from human imperfection; but when He speaks to mortals on earth, He uses the language of mortals; and whatever may be the imperfection of the medium, this revelation of God displays his glory in the brightest light in which human eyes can behold it.

But are the spots in the sun and the obscurities in the Bible to be accounted imperfections? The light of the sun is pure and abundant; and, if it were deficient, the deficiency might be supplied, as well by enlarging the sun, as by removing its spots. It would, therefore, be as rational to complain that the sun is not larger, as to complain that there are spots in its disc. In like manner, the light of God's Word is pure, and sufficient to make men wise to salvation; and we might as well complain that the Bible is not larger, as that it contains obscurities. Besides, the

obscurities of the Bible may have a beneficial use. If, as some astronomers suppose, the solar spots are the body of the sun, seen through the partings of its luminous atmosphere, they can scarcely be deemed imperfections; much less can they be so regarded, if they are streams of gas rising in the sun's atmosphere, and diffusing itself to become fuel for the lamp of day. According to the latter hypothesis, the spots are as far from being imperfections, as are the clouds that sometimes darken our sky, but which are the rich sources of the earth's fertility, and the granaries of our bread. So, some of the obscurities of the Bible are the deep things of God, seen through the light of revelation — the inscrutable mystery of the divine nature appearing through the light with which He has clothed Himself. Other mysteries are, in process of time, dissipated; and, like clouds which burst, pour out a blessing. It was a mystery "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and partakers of the promise of Christ by the gospel;" but in due time this mystery was explained, and the bursting cloud poured the richest blessing on all the Gentile world. The Old Testament dispensation was dark, abounding with shadows of good things to come; but since the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, the dark places have been illuminated, and are full of instruction. Prophecies have been delivered in obscure language; but their fulfilment has interpreted them. Some obscurities have given occasion to the infidel to charge the Bible with contradictions; but a careful examination of the inspired word has not only served to repel the charge by reconciling the apparent discrepancies, but it has added new proof that the Scriptures were written by undesigning and honest men, without any collusion; and that there is perfect harmony in their statements, even when apparently most discordant. Men of superior intellect may find a pleasant and profitable exercise of their powers in investigating those parts of the Bible which are less clear; while its plainest truths are adapted to men of least capacity, and are sufficient for their necessities. Here are waters in which "a lamb may wade," and in which "an elephant may swim." There is yet another use of Bible obscurities. When God gave a law to mankind, he did not give one which it was impossible to violate, but one which men, as free agents, might violate, and by violating bring ruin on their souls. So, when he gave a revelation to mankind, he did not give one which could not be cavilled at, but

one at which men might cavil, and, by caviling, bring wrath upon themselves. The obscurities of the Bible serve for this use; for the Bible itself declares, that it contains "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction." Let those who choose rather to cavil at the obscurities of the Bible, than to walk in its light, read this declaration, and fear and tremble.

The revelations contained in the Bible have the attestation of MIRACLES. It is a plain dictate of common sense, that Almighty God, who created and governs the world, may direct its movements as He chooses. He appointed the laws of Nature, and He may suspend these laws whenever He pleases, and turn the course of things out of the ordinary channel. It is equally clear, that none but the Author of Nature can effect such changes. It follows, therefore, that miracles, if wrought in attestation of a revelation professing to be from Heaven, stamp upon it the seal of Omnipotence. Persons who saw such miracles wrought, reasoned well when they said: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

Though miracles furnished, to those who saw them with their own eyes, a more impressive evidence than to us who see them through the light of history, yet the argument founded on them is perfectly conclusive, even at the present time. That Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, performed works truly miraculous, is as well attested as any ancient fact whatever. The character of the works attributed to them, their number, the circumstances in which they were performed, the absence of everything indicating fraud or imposture, the sufferings by which the witnesses demonstrated their sincerity, the credence which their testimony obtained rapidly and extensively, and in the face of bitter persecution, and the absence of all counter testimony; all these considerations compel the belief that miracles were wrought, and if wrought, the revelation which they attest must be from God. The evidence, though it may be less impressive, is not less decisive than it would have been if we had personally witnessed the miracles.

We are not wholly indebted for the evidence of miracles, to the light of history. It does not need historical proof to satisfy our minds that the pyramids of Egypt were built by human labor and

skill. We are as well satisfied of this, as if we had seen them rise under the hands of the workmen. We know that they are the work of man, because they resemble, in kind, other works of man. But he who gazes on these stupendous structures, may turn his eyes to the great globe beneath them, and feel equally well assured that it is not the work of man. So, in contemplating a system of heathen mythology or philosophy, we may be convinced that it is of human origin, because it bears the marks of man's workmanship; but in contemplating the Bible, and the religion which it has introduced into the world, we may be as well assured that the origin of these is superhuman. A system so destitute of everything which could recommend it to the carnal mind, and claiming to be attested "with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles," could not, in the absence of such miracles, obtain, according to the ordinary course of things, easy and extensive credence among mankind, and become firmly established in their confidence. The propagation, in such circumstances, must itself have been miraculous. It is of no importance to the present argument, whether the miracle was wrought before the eyes of him who received the doctrine, or on his mind, to incline him to receive it. In either case, there was a miracle, an interposition of Divine Power, and such an interposition demonstrated that the doctrine was from God.

The PROPHECIES which the Bible contains, must have proceeded from infallible foreknowledge. This is proved by their exact fulfilment.

Daniel prophesied to Nebuchadnezzar, the proud head of the Babylonian empire, then in its glory and strength, that this empire would give place to three others which were to arise after it.[1] This succession of empires, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, is more fully described afterward in the prophecies of Daniel, together with a series of events extending down to the present time.[2] More than a century before the time of Daniel, the prophet Isaiah predicted[3] the taking of Babylon by the Persians, who were, at the time of the prediction, a feeble and obscure nation. He foretold the very name of the Persian leader, and the manner of his entrance into the city, through gates which, by a special ordering of Providence, were carelessly left open by

[1] Dan. ii. 39, 45. [2] Ch. vii. 12. [3] Is. xxi. 9; xlv. 1, 3.

the Babylonians in their drunken festivity. Other prophets foretold the destruction and final desolation of Babylon,[1] and of Nineveh;[2] the overthrow of ancient Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar,[3] and afterward of insular Tyre by Alexander,[4] and the decline and present state of Egypt,[5] once the proudest of nations. All these predictions were made when the events predicted were so improbable, that they could not be foreknown by any human sagacity; yet history, and the reports of travellers, attest their exact accomplishment. Many other examples of fulfilled prophecy might readily be cited.

The prophecies concerning the Jews are remarkable, and we refer to them with the more satisfaction, because the reader has probably, to some extent, personal knowledge of the facts predicted. These people are scattered through our nation, and through most of the nations on earth. Their synagogues, in which they meet to worship the God of their fathers, are found in all our principal cities. The Scriptures of the Old Testament are regularly read in their public worship, and are regarded with religious veneration, as their sacred book, received from God by their ancient prophets, and handed down to them from their forefathers. This book minutely describes,[6] in the language of prediction, the sufferings which they have undergone; their wonderful preservation as a distinct people, notwithstanding these sufferings, and their dispersed condition among all nations. Other ancient tribes, when scattered, have been lost in the general mass of mankind; but these people, after centuries of dispersion and persecution, still remain distinct, and stand forth to the world as witnesses of the wonderful fulfilment of the predictions respecting them, uttered by their ancient prophets.

The sacred writings of the Jews not only contain predictions of the dispersion, sufferings, and wonderful preservation of this people, but also furnish explanation of these extraordinary events. The book describes a covenant between this nation and the God whom they worship, and its records show that they have repeatedly violated this covenant, and suffered the threatened penalty. The whole history of the nation illustrates the dealings of God with

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[1] Jer. li. [2] Nahum i, iii. [3] Ezek. xxvi. 7, 11.
[4] Ibid. xxvii. 32. [5] Ibid. xxix. [6] Lev. xxvi; Deut. xxvii. xxx.

them, in accordance with the stipulations of this covenant. Once before, as a punishment of their unfaithfulness, they were driven from their land into captivity for seventy years, yet they were preserved and brought back. The prophetic declarations of their sacred volume explain that their present dispersion and sufferings are, in like manner, in consequence of their crimes, and that their preservation is in prospect of another restoration. Their condition, therefore, resembles that of a malefactor nailed to the cross, with his accusation written over his head; a fit punishment for the nation that crucified the Lord of glory. They hold in their hands the book which specifies their crimes and predicts their sufferings, and they furnish, in their persons, the spectacle of these predictions fulfilled. They not only claim that their book is divine, but they are the proof of its divinity.

The Jews may be made witnesses for the New Testament also, which they reject, and for Christianity, which they hate. What crime so great, has extended their dispersion and sufferings through the long period of eighteen centuries? The New Testament gives the only satisfactory answer to this inquiry, and it answers in perfect accordance with their own Scriptures. They have rejected and crucified their King, their long-expected Messiah, whom their prophets had foretold. It was predicted that he would appear before the tribe of Judah should become extinct, or should cease to maintain a distinct government of its own;[1] before the second temple should be destroyed;[2] and in 490 years from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem.[3] At this time Jesus Christ appeared, claiming to be their Messiah, and furnishing most abundant proofs that he came from God; yet, as their prophets had foretold, they rejected him,[4] and united with Gentile rulers to destroy him.[5] Their own Scriptures, and their confessed hatred of Jesus Christ, fully make out the crime for which they suffer, and these unite with the known fact of their sufferings to demonstrate the Messiahship of Jesus and the divine origin of Christianity.

The New Testament contains various predictions[6] which have been exactly fulfilled concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; the calamities of the Jews; their dispersion and their preservation;

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[1] Gen. xlix. 10. [2] Haggai ii. 7, 9. [3] Dan. ix. 24–27. [4] Is. liii. 3.
[5] Ps. ii. 1, 2. [6] Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi.

also concerning the persecutions of Christianity; its spread through the world, and the Papal Apostasy.[1] Besides these, it contains predictions, yet not accomplished, of the conversion of the Gentiles, the restoration of the Jews, and the millennial state of the Church. When these shall have been fulfilled, the prophetical evidence now constantly accumulating will be complete.

In concluding this brief inqiry into the origin of the Bible, we may admire and adore the wonderful providence of God, which has made his enemies the preservers and witnesses of his revelation. The Jews, who killed the prophets and crucified the Son of God himself, have preserved and transmitted the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and are now witnesses to the world of its divine origin, and the truth of its prophecies. The Roman Catholic Church, the great Antichrist, or man of sin, drunk with the blood of the saints, has transmitted to us the Scriptures of the New Testament, and now gives, in the same two-fold manner, its testimony to this part of the Sacred Volume. Even the infidel scoffer is made an unconscious witness. In its pages, his very scoffs are predicted, and his corrupt heart, from which, rather than from sober judgment, these scoffs proceed, is portrayed with an accuracy and skill which bespeak the Author divine, the Searcher of hearts. The word which "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," must be "the word of God." Even the reluctant tongue of the infidel, as in the case of Rousseau, is sometimes constrained to utter its testimony aloud; and at other times, when danger comes or death threatens, his alarm and terror divulge the truth, that his rock is not as our rock, himself being judge. Unhappy infidel! Is there a God? Hast thou an immortal soul? Until thou canst, with unfaltering hardihood, answer, No to both these inquiries, do not cast away from thee the Bible, the Book of God, the Light of immortality.

II. AUTHORITY.

THOUGH the Bible was written by inspired men, they are to be regarded merely as the instruments chosen, fitted, and employed

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 3–12; 1 John ii. 18; 1 Tim. iv. 1–3.

by God, for the production of this work. God himself is the author of the Bible. When we read its sacred pages, we should realize that God speaks to us, and when we suffer it to lie neglected, we should remember that we are refusing to listen to God, when he proffers to instruct us on subjects of infinite moment.

The Bible contains the *testimony* of God, and is therefore a Rule of *Faith*. The declarations of an honest man ought to be believed, much more ought those which are made by the God of truth; "if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." To reject the testimony of God, is to make him a liar. To call a fellow-man a liar, is to offer an insult of the grossest character. This insult we offer to the great God, when we refuse to receive his testimony, given to us in his holy Word.

The Bible contains the *precepts* of God, and is therefore a Rule of *Duty*. We are bound to obey the commands of parents and civil rulers, but God has a higher claim on our obedience. He is our Father in heaven, and the Supreme Lawgiver of the universe. Against this high authority we rebel, when we refuse to obey the precepts of the Bible.

The Bible contains the *promises* of God, and is therefore a Rule of *Hope*. It determines, not only what we are to believe and to do, but also what we are to expect. It presents, as the foundation of our hope, the promise and the oath of God, two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. We look to him as the rewarder of those that diligently seek him, and all our confidence respecting the nature and extent of this reward, and the certainty of our obtaining it, is founded on the sure word of prophecy, the Bible.

Whether, as a rule of faith, of duty, or of hope, the authority of the Bible is *supreme*. We may rely on the testimony of men, but they sometimes deceive us. We may regulate our conduct by the command of those who are over us, or by the dictates of our own conscience, but rulers may command what is wrong, and conscience is not infallible. We may cherish hopes founded on human promises, or the natural tendencies of things, but human promises are often delusive, and the promises of Nature are buds which, however beautiful and fragrant, are often blasted before they produce fruit. God never deceives. "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth

forever." When the Bible speaks, all else may be silent, and its decisions leave no room for doubt and admit no appeal.

The authority of the Bible is *independent.* It was not conferred on it by the inspired men who wrote it; nor does it derive any from the persons who have transmitted it to us. The purest church on earth cannot invest it with authority; much less can the corrupt Church of Rome. The inspired writers referred the authority of what they wrote to God; and here it must rest. The transcribers of the manuscripts, who have been the agents of Providence in preserving and transmitting the Sacred Volume to us, and the printers and bookbinders by whose labors this volume is so widely circulated, have conferred no authority on it, and it has received as little from the Church of Rome as from these. It possesses authority simply because it is the word of God.

The authority of the Bible is *immediate.* Its address is directly from God, and directly to the mind and heart of every individual reader. We have no mediator but Christ, and no infallible interpreter but the Holy Spirit. We may derive assistance from men in understanding the Bible, but they have no right to understand it for us. We should employ our own minds in the study of God's Word, and allow no human interpreter to intervene between God and our own conscience. We should say, each one for himself, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

What a precious gift is the Bible! Who will not prize it? Who will not bind it to his heart? We stand on the narrow isthmus of life, between two oceans, the boundless past and the boundless future. The records of eternity past are beyond our reach, but the Ancient of Days has opened them, and has revealed to us in the Bible whatever it is necessary that we should know. The vanishing present is all important to us, because on it depends our everlasting all, but who will instruct us how to use the swiftly passing moments as we ought? The only wise God has condescended to speak to us in the Bible, and to teach us how to order our steps in life's short way, so as to insure life eternal. The future world is just before us. For myself, I realize that I am standing on the shore of the boundless ocean, with but an inch of crumbling sand remaining. I hear the shrieks of the dying infidel at my side, to whose view all is covered with impenetrable darkness. He, too, has come to the brink, and would gladly refuse to proceed, but he

cannot. Perplexed, terrified, shuddering, he plunges in and sinks, he knows not whither. How precious, at this trying moment, is the Book of God! How cheering this Light from heaven! Before it I see the shades retiring. The Bible lifts its torch—nay, not a feeble torch, such as reason may raise, to shine on the darkness and render it visible; the Bible sheds the light of the noonday sun on the vast prospect before me, and enables me, tranquil and joyful, to launch into eternity with the full assurance of hope. Mortals, hastening to the retributions of eternity, be wise; receive the revelation from heaven presented to you in the Bible; attend diligently to its instructions, and reverence its authority, as the word of the final Judge before whom you will soon appear.

BOOK SECOND.

DOCTRINE CONCERNING GOD.

INTRODUCTION.

DUTY OF LOVE TO GOD.

"THOU shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."[1] In this manner the Bible commands the chief of all duties. No reasons are assigned for the requirement. No proof is adduced that God exists, or that he possesses such perfections as entitle him to the supreme love of his creatures. Jehovah steps forth before the subjects of his government, and issues his command. He waits for no formal introduction. He lifts up his voice with majesty. Without promise, and without threat, he proclaims his law, and leaves his subjects to their responsibility.

From the manner of this announcement, we may derive instruction. It is not necessary that we should enter into a formal demonstration that God exists, or a formal investigation of his attributes, before we begin the duty of loving him. We already know enough of him for this; and to postpone the performance of the duty until we have completed our investigations, is to commence them with unsanctified hearts, and in rebellion against God. From the dawn of our being we have had demonstrations of God's existence and character, blazing around us like the light of noonday. The heavens and the earth have declared his glory; his ministers and people have proclaimed his name; he is not to us an unknown God, except so far as our minds are wilfully blind to the displays of his glory. If, therefore, we withhold the affections of our hearts, we can have no excuse in the plea that more evidence is

[1] Deut. vi. 5.

needed. And with hearts so alienated from God at the outset, all our religious inquiries are likely to be unprofitable. What probability is there that further proof will produce its proper impression and effect on our minds, if that which is already in our possession is unheeded or abused? If, from what we already know of God, we admire and love him, we shall desire to know more of him, and shall prosecute the study with profit and delight; but, if we have already shut him out of our hearts, all our intellectual investigations respecting him may be expected to leave us in spiritual blindness.

The duty required corresponds, in character, to the religion, of which it is an essential part. Heathen gods could not claim the supreme love of their worshippers; and heathen minds had no idea of a religion founded on supreme love to their deities. To some extent, they were objects of fear; and much that appertained to their supposed character and history, served for amusement, or to interest the imagination; but the conduct attributed to them was often such as even heathen virtue disapproved. Hence, they could not be objects of supreme love; and no one claimed it for them. The requirement of supreme love demonstrates the religion of the Bible to be from the true God; and when we begin our religious investigations with the admission of this obligation, and the full recognition of it in our hearts, we may be assured that we are proceeding in the right way.

The simplicity of the requirement is admirable. No explanation of the duty is needed. Forms of worship may be numerous and various, and questions may arise as to the forms which will be most acceptable. Many outward duties of morality are often determined with much difficulty. Perplexing questions arise as to the nature of repentance and faith, and the uninformed need instruction respecting them. But no one needs to be told what love is; the humblest mind can understand the requirement, and may feel pleasure in the consciousness of rendering obedience to it; and the learned philosopher stands in the presence of this precept as a little child, and feels its power binding every faculty that he possesses. This simple principle pervades all religion, and binds all intelligences, small and great, to God, the centre of the great system. Between it and the power of gravitation in the natural

world, which binds atoms and masses, pebbles and vast planets, a beautiful analogy may be traced.

The comprehensiveness of the precept is not less admirable. From it rises the precept, Love thy neighbor as thyself; and on these two all the law rests. We love our neighbors because they are God's creatures, and the subjects of his government, and because he has commanded us. We love God supremely, because he is the greatest and best of beings; and we love other beings, according to the importance of each in the universal system of being. One principle pervades both precepts, as one principle of gravitation binds the earth to the sun, and the parts of the earth to each other. This law binds angels to the throne of God, and to each other; and binds men and angels together, as fellow-subjects of the same sovereign. The decalogue is this law expanded, and adapted to the condition and relations of mankind. Love is not only the fulfilling of the law, but it is also the essence of gospel morality. All Christian obedience springs from it; and, without it, no form of obedience is acceptable to God. He who loves God supremely, cannot be guilty of that unbelief which makes God a liar, and he cannot reflect on the sins which he has committed against God, without sincere penitence.

We must not overlook the tendency of this precept to produce universal good. Every one knows how much the order and happiness found in human society, depend on love. If all kind affections were banished from the hearts of men, earth would be converted at once into a pandemonium. What love is left on earth renders it tolerable, and the love which reigns in heaven makes it a place of bliss. Perfect obedience to the great law of love is sufficient to render all creatures happy. It opens, within the breast, a perennial source of enjoyment; and it meets, from without, the smile and blessing of an approving God.

Though the religion of love is clearly taught in the book of God only, yet, when we have learned it there, we can discover its agreement with natural religion. It will be useful to observe how the moral tendencies of our nature accord, on this point, with the teachings of revelation.

The wickedness of man has been a subject of complaint in all ages. The ancient heathen complained of the degeneracy of their times, and talked of a golden age, long passed, in which virtue

prevailed. In modern heathen nations, together with the depravity that prevails, some sense of that depravity exists; and everywhere the necessity or desirableness of a more virtuous state of society is admitted. In Christian lands, the very infidels, who scoff at all religion with one breath, will, with the next, satirize the wickedness of mankind. It is the united judgment of every nation, and every age, that the practice of men falls below their own standard of virtue. It is, therefore, necessary, in order to acquire the best notions of virtue that nature can give us, to turn away from the practice of men to those moral sentiments implanted in the human breast, which condemn this practice, and urge to higher virtue.

It is well known that men judge the actions of others with more severity than their own. Our appetites and passions interfere with the decisions of conscience, when our own conduct is the subject of examination. Hence, the general moral sense of mankind is a better standard of virtue than the individual conscience. In looking to the judgment of others, with a view to determine the morality of our actions, the judgment of those is especially to be regarded who are to be benefited or injured by our deeds. Hence, natural religion approves the rule — Do unto others as you would, in like circumstances, that they should do unto you.

When the vice of others interferes with our happiness, we are then most keenly sensible of its existence and atrocity. However vague our notions of virtue may be, we always conceive of it as tending to promote the happiness of others. Yet it is not every tendency to promote happiness which we conceive to be virtuous. The food that we eat, and the couch on which we lie, tend to promote our happiness; yet we do not ascribe virtue to these inanimate things. Virtue belongs only to rational and moral agents; and the promotion of happiness must be intentional to be accounted virtuous. There is still another limitation. Men sometimes confer benefits on others, with the expectation of receiving greater benefits in return. Where the motive for the action is merely the benefit expected in return, the common judgment of mankind refuses to characterize the deed as virtuous. To constitute virtue, there must be an intentional promotion of happiness in others; and this intention must be disinterested. Natural religion does not deny that a higher standard of morality may exist; but it holds that disinte-

rested benevolence is virtue, and it determines the morality of actions by the disinterested benevolence which they exhibit.

Some have maintained that self-love is the first principle of virtue, its central affection, which, spreading first to those most nearly related to us, extends gradually to others more remote, and widens at length into universal benevolence. This system of morality is self-contradictory. While it claims to aim at universal happiness, it makes it the duty of each individual to aim, not at this public good, but at his own private benefit. Whenever the interest of another comes in conflict with his own, it is made his duty to aim at the latter, and to promote that of his neighbor only so far as it may conduce to his own. It is true, that the advocates of this system bring in reason as a restraining influence, and suppose that it will so regulate the exercise of self-love as to result in the general good. According to this system, if we, in aiming at our own happiness, practise fraud and falsehood with a view to promote it, and find ourselves defeated in the attainment of our object, we may charge our failure, not on the virtuous principle by which it is assumed that we have been moved, but on the failure of our reason to restrain and regulate it so as to attain its end. If it be said, that conscience will not permit us to be happy in the practise of fraud and falsehood, and that self-love, aware of this, avoids those practices so inconsistent with our internal peace, it is clearly admitted that conscience is a higher principle of our nature, to the decisions of which our self-love is compelled to yield.

As virtue aims at the general good, it must favour the means necessary for the attainment of this end. Civil government and laws, enacted and executed in wisdom and justice, are highly conducive to the general welfare, and these receive the approbation and support of the virtuous. Were an individual of our race, by a happy exception to the general rule, born with a virtuous bias of the mind, instead of the selfish propensity natural to mankind; and were this virtuous bias fostered and developed in his education, he would be found seeking the good of all. His first benefits conferred, would be on those nearest to him; but his disinterested benevolence would not stop here. As his acquaintance extended into the ramifications of society, his desire and labour for the general good would extend with it, and civil government, wholesome laws, and every institution tending to public benefit, would

receive his cordial approbation and support; and every wise and righteous governor, and every subordinate individual, aiming at the public good, would be an object of his favour. If we suppose the knowledge of this individual to increase, and his virtuous principles to expand, widening the exercise of universal benevolence; and if, at length, the idea of a God, a being of every possible moral excellence, the wise and righteous governor of the universe, should be presented; how would his heart be affected? Here his virtuous principles would find occasion for their highest exercise, and would grow into religious devotion. This glorious being would have the highest place in his admiration and love; and the discovery of his universal dominion would produce ineffable joy. Such are the affections of heart which even natural religion teaches, that the knowledge of God's existence and perfections ought to produce.

In God's written Word, we learn our duty in a reverse method. We are not left to trace it out by a slow process, beginning with the first exercise of moral principle in the heart, and rising at length to the infinite God; but the existence and character of God are immediately presented, and the first and chief of all duties is at once announced: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." How sublime! how appropriate! The virtuous mind is open to receive such a revelation; and its perfect accordance with the best teachings of natural religion, recommends it to our understandings and our hearts. The second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is introduced, not as leading to the first, but as subordinate to it. It takes the place which properly belongs to it in a revelation from the supreme authority.

Love has been divided into benevolence, beneficence, and complacence. This division may at first appear inconsistent with the simplicity which has been ascribed to love. Benevolence is the disposition to do good to an object, and beneficence is the conferring of that good. The latter is not properly love, but the effect or manifestation of it. On the other hand, complacence includes the cause of the love together with the affection itself. Love may be exercised toward an unworthy object, as when God loves those who are dead in trespasses and sins. But it may be exercised toward those whose moral character renders them fit objects. In this case, the love being connected with approbation of the character beloved, is called complacence. When love has an inani-

mate thing for its object, as when Isaac loved savory meat, the term refers to the deriving of enjoyment; but when the object of love is a sentient being, the term always implies the conferring of enjoyment, even when some pleasure has been received, or some enjoyment in return is expected.

Love to God implies cordial approbation of his moral character. His natural attributes, eternity, immensity, omnipotence, &c., may fill us with admiration; but these are not the proper objects of love. If we worship him in the beauty of holiness, the beauty of his holiness must excite the love of our hearts. As our knowledge of these moral perfections increases, our delight in them must increase; and this delight will stimulate to further study of them; and to a more diligent observation of the various methods in which they are manifested. The display of them, even in the most terrible exhibitions of his justice, will be contemplated with reverent, but approving awe; and their united glory, as seen in the great scheme of redemption by Christ, will be viewed with unmixed and never-ceasing delight.

Love to God includes joy in his happiness. He is not only perfectly holy, but perfectly happy; and it is our duty to rejoice in his happiness. In loving our neighbor, we rejoice in his present happiness, and desire to increase it. We cannot increase the already perfect happiness of God, but we can rejoice in that which he possesses. If we delight in the happiness of God, we shall labor to please him in all things, to do whatever he commands, and to advance all the plans, the accomplishment of which he has so much at heart. Love, therefore, includes obedience to his commands, and resignation and submission to his will.

Love to God will render it a pleasing task to examine the proofs of his existence, and to study those glorious attributes which render him the worthy object of supreme affection. Let us enter on this study, prompted by holy love, and a strong desire that our love may be increased.

CHAPTER I.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

THERE IS A GOD.[1]

The doctrine that God exists, is not now to be demonstrated as a new truth. It has been supposed in all the preceding pages; and the proofs of it have been brought to view, in various ways. But, for the sake of systematic arrangement, it will be proper to collect these proofs under one head; and a clearer statement of them will tend to the confirmation of our faith.

1. Our moral nature demonstrates the existence of God.

Our moral nature is adapted to moral government. We find this government within us administered by conscience, and it meets us from without in the influence which we experience from the moral judgments and feelings of others. It restrains our appetites and passions; and, however unwelcome this restraint may be to our vicious propensities, every one knows that it is conducive to his well-being.

We are social as well as moral beings. The circumstances in which we enter the world, and the propensities which we bring with us, unite to render the establishment of society necessary. The birds congregate in flocks, and the bees in swarms, and their instincts are adapted to the social relations which they form. To man in society, moral principles are indispensable. Banish from every member of human society the restraints which his conscience and the moral sense of the community impose on him, and you will desolate the earth, or convert it into a hell. Brute-force, and diabolical cunning, under the dominion of lawless passions, will take the mastery of the world, and fill it with wretchedness.

From the combined influence of our moral and social principles, civil governments have originated, and their existence has been found by experience indispensable to the well-being of society. These governments have differed very widely in their degrees of excellence; and some of them have been most unrighteously and

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[1] Gen. i. 1; Ps. xiv. 1; Mark xii. 32; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Heb. iii. 4.

cruelly administered; yet the very worst of them has been considered preferable to wild anarchy.

The notion of moral government, and the feeling of its necessity, spring up naturally in the human mind; but no earthly form of it satisfies our desires, or meets our necessities. Conscience restrains us; and, when we have disregarded its monitions, stings us with remorse; but men are still wicked. Public sentiment stamps vice with infamy; but, in spite of public sentiment, men are vicious. Civil government holds out its penalties, and the ruler brandishes his sword; but men persevere in wickedness, and often with impunity. The voice of nature within us calls for a government free from these imperfections. If, from the idea of a petty ruler over a single tribe or nation, we ascend to that of a moral governor over all intelligent creatures; if, instead of the imperfect moral judgments and feelings which we find in men, we attribute to this universal ruler, all possible moral perfections, if we invest him with knowledge sufficient to detect every crime, and power sufficient to manifest his disapprobation of it in the most suitable and effectual way; and if this exalted sovereign, instead of being far from us, is brought into such a relation to us, that in him we live, move, and have our being; we shall have the most sublime conception of moral government, of which our minds are capable. This conception is presented in the proposition, THERE IS A GOD. The idea of God's existence, as the moral ruler of the universe, accords precisely with the tendencies and demands of our moral nature; and, without admitting it, our moral faculties and the phenomena which they exhibit, are totally inexplicable.

The moral principles of our nature find occasion for development and exercise, in the relations which we sustain to our fellow-creatures. But, for their full development and exercise nothing furnishes opportunity, but the relation which we bear to God, and his universal dominion. This exercise of them constitutes religion. Religion is, therefore, the perfection of morality; and the fundamental doctrine of religion is the existence of God.

2. The existence of the world and the contrivances which it contains, demonstrate the existence of God.

While our moral nature leads us to the conception of God, as the moral governor of the universe, and to the belief of his existence, our intellectual nature approaches him, as the Great First

Cause. Reason traces the chain of cause and effect throughout its links. It finds every link dependent on that which precedes it; and it asks on what does the entire chain depend? It obtains no satisfactory answer to this question, until it has admitted the existence of an eternal, self-existent, and independent being, as the first cause of all things. Here, and here only, the mind finds repose.

The argument which has been most relied on in natural religion, to prove the existence of God, is derived from the indications of contrivance, with which Nature abounds. The adaptation of means to ends, and the accomplishment of purposes by contrivances of consummate skill, are everywhere visible. Contrivance implies a contriver. The intelligence displayed is often found in creatures that have no intelligence; and in other cases, when found in intelligent creatures, it is manifestly not from themselves; because it exists without their knowledge, and operates without their control. The contrivance must be referred to an intelligent First Cause. This argument for the existence of God, is of great practical value, because it is presented to our minds daily, and hourly, in all the works of Nature. We meet it in the sun-beams, which impart to plants and animals, the warmth necessary to life; and, to every eye, the light without which, eyes would be useless. It presents itself in the eyes of every man, beast, bird, fish, insect, and reptile, and is most convincingly exhibited in the arrangements for receiving and refracting the light, and employing it for the purposes of vision; a contrivance as truly mechanical, and conformed to the laws of optics, as that which is seen in the structure of the telescope. We behold it in the descending shower which fertilizes the earth, and causes the grass to grow; and in the bursting germ, the spreading blade, the rising stalk, and the ripening grain, in all which a skilful contrivance is displayed, that infinitely transcends all human art. We discover it in the instincts by which the parent hen hatches her eggs, and takes care of her young; and in the adaptation of every species of animals on land, in air, or in water, to their mode and condition of life. It is seen in the return of day and night, the revolution of the seasons, the wind that sweeps the sky, and the vapor that rises from the ocean, and floats through the atmosphere. We find it in the bones of the body, fitted for their respective motions, and in the muscles which move them; in

the throbbing heart, the circulating blood, the digesting stomach, and the heaving lungs. In every thing which the eye beholds, or the mind contemplates, we discover the manifestations of the Creator's wisdom and power. The devotional heart is struck with the evidence of God's existence, so abundantly displayed in all his handiworks, and is incited to admire and adore. The whole universe becomes a grand temple, pervaded with the presence and glory of the deity; and every place becomes an altar, on which may be offered to him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

3. The doctrine that there is a God, is confirmed by the common consent of mankind.

There have been tribes of men without literature, and, to a great extent, without science and arts; but the notion of an invisible, overruling power, with some form of religious worship, has been nearly, or quite universal. In this particular, man is distinguished from all other animals that inhabit the globe; and if there has been any portion of our race in whom no idea of God and religion has appeared, it may be said of them, that they have so far brutalized themselves, as to hide from view the characteristic distinctions of human nature. Now, however it may be accounted for, that a belief in the existence of God has prevailed so generally among mankind; the fact of its prevalence is an argument for the truth of the opinion. If it is an ancient revelation handed down by tradition, that revelation proceeded from God, and therefore proves his existence; and if it springs up naturally in the human mind, in the circumstances in which we are placed, what Nature universally teaches, may be received as true.

4. Divine revelation dispels all doubt as to the existence of God.

In the Bible, the existence of God is from the very first assumed. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."[1] The doctrine, though formally declared in scarcely a single passage, is represented as fundamental in religion. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is;"[2] and the denial of it is attributed to folly; "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God."[3] The volume of revelation is a light emanating from the Father of lights, and is, of itself, an independent proof of his existence. As we study its pages, in his light we shall see light; and a more realizing

[1] Gen. i. 1. [2] Heb. xi. 6. [3] Ps. xiv. 1.

and abiding conviction that he, the great Source of light, exists, will occupy our minds.

The perfect harmony between natural and revealed religion, with respect to this doctrine, confirms the teaching of both. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."[1] While heaven and earth, day and night, speak for God, he speaks for himself in his inspired word, confirming the testimony which they give, and completing the instruction which they convey. Revelation never contradicts or sets aside the teachings of natural religion. God affirms, that "the invisible things of him are from the creation of the world clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and Godhead."[2] It is no derogation from the authority or perfection of the Scriptures, that we study natural religion. The Scriptures themselves direct us to this study. "Ask the beasts, and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee."[3] The same God who speaks to us in his word, speaks to us also in his works; and in whatever manner he speaks, we should hear, and receive instruction.

It is a lamentable proof of human depravity, that men should deny or disregard the existence of God. We read of the fool, who says in his heart, there is no God; of nations that forget God; and of individuals who have not God in all their thoughts. Such persons do not delight in God; and therefore they say, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Of such atheism, the only effectual cure is a new heart. For the occasional suggestion of atheistic doubts, with which a pious man may be harassed, the remedy is, a diligent study of God's word and works, a careful marking of his hand in Providence, and a prayerful and confiding acknowledgment of him in all our ways. If we habitually walk with God, we shall not doubt his existence.

The invisibility of God is one of the obstacles to the exercise of a lively faith in his existence. It may assist in removing this obstacle, to reflect that the human mind is also invisible; and yet we never doubt that it exists. We hear the words, and see the actions of a fellow-man, and these indicate to us the character and state of

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[1] Ps. xix. 1, 2. [2] Rom. i. 20. [3] Job xii. 7.

his mind, so as to excite in us admiration or contempt, love or hatred. If, while we listen to his words, and observe his actions, we clearly perceive the intelligence from which these words and actions proceed, why can we not, with equal clearness, perceive the intelligence from which the movements of nature proceed? If we can know, admire, and love, an unseen human mind, it is equally possible to know, admire, and love an unseen God.

CHAPTER II.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

As we acquire knowledge of other beings, and of the relations which they hold to us, opportunity is given for the development of our moral principles, and the exercise of our moral feelings. It accords with the dictates of individual conscience, with the moral judgments common to mankind, and with the teachings of God's word, that the feelings which we exercise, and the actions which we perform towards others, should have regard to their characters and their relations to us. To understand our duty towards God, we must know his character. It is not enough to believe that he exists, but we should labour to acquire a knowledge of him. Let us, then, reverently inquire, Who is the Lord?

SECTION I.—UNITY.

THERE IS BUT ONE GOD.[1]

The heathen nations have worshipped many gods; but the inspired volume throughout inculcates the doctrine, that there is but one God. Moses said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;"[2] and, in the New Testament, the same truth is taught: "There is one God, and one Mediator;"[3] "To us there is but one God."[4]

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[1] Deut. vi. 4; Ps. lxxxvi. 10; Mark xii. 29, 32; John xvii. 3; Gal. iii. 20; Eph. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5; James ii. 19.

[2] Deut. vi. 4. [3] 1 Tim. ii. 5. [4] 1 Cor. viii. 6.

It is not clear that the unity of God can be proved by natural religion. In some of the reasonings which have been relied on, the thing to be proved is assumed. The most satisfactory argument is derived from the uniformity of counsel, which appears in the works of creation and providence. The same laws of Nature prevail everywhere; so that, in passing from one region to another, we never feel that we have entered the dominion of another Lord. Light which emanates from the remote fixed stars, possesses the same properties, and obeys the same laws, as that which comes from the sun of our own system.

The proof from revelation is clear and decisive. It is true, that plural names of the deity are frequently used in the Old Testament; but it is manifest that they were not designed to teach the doctrine of polytheism. In Deut. vi. 4, the word "God" is plural, in the original Hebrew; but the whole passage contains the most unequivocal declaration of the unity of God. In Gen. i. 1, the name "God" is plural, but the verb "created" is singular, and therefore bars out all inference in favour of polytheism. In several passages, plural pronouns are used when God speaks of himself. "Let us make man;"[1] "Let us go down;"[2] "The man is become as one of us;"[3] these passages, and especially the last of them, cannot well be reconciled with the doctrine of God's unity, so abundantly taught elsewhere, without supposing a reference to the doctrine of the trinity, which will be considered hereafter.

The unity of God renders his moral government one, uniting the subjects of it into one great empire. It leaves us in no doubt to whom our allegiance is due; and it fixes one centre in the universe to which the affections of all hearts should be directed. It tends to unite the people of God: as we have "one God," so we have "one body, and one spirit."[4]

Section II.—SPIRITUALITY.

God is a Spirit.[5]

By our external senses we obtain knowledge of properties which belong to a class of substances called matter; such as extension, solidity or impenetrability, divisibility, figure, color.

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[1] Gen. i. 26. [2] Gen. xi. 7. [3] Gen. iii. 22.
[4] Eph. iv. 4, 6. [5] John iv. 24; Is. xxxi. 3; Heb. xii. 9.

By consciousness, we have knowledge of our own thoughts and feelings; and these we ascribe to a substance, called mind, which is capable of perceiving, remembering, comparing, judging, reasoning, and willing. The distinction between these two classes of substances is recognised in the judgments of all men. We never attribute thought to fire, air, earth, or water; and we never conceive of mind as round or square, black or white. The properties which we discover in our own minds, we attribute to the minds of others; and we readily conceive the existence of these properties in beings of a different order. The term *spirit* is used to denote an immaterial and intelligent substance, or being; one which is without the peculiar properties of matter, and possesses properties analogous to those of the human mind. In this sense, God is a spirit. He is not extended, solid, and divisible, like a rock, a tree, or a human body; but thinks and wills, in a manner free from all imperfection.

The texts of Scripture which directly teach the spirituality of God, are few. It may be inferred from Isaiah xxxi. 3: "The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." The foundation of the parallelism, in this passage, is that God is a spirit. It may be inferred, also, from the language of Scripture, in which God is called the Father of spirits: "We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?"[1] A father and his children possess a common nature, and, as the fathers of our flesh, are flesh, so, the Father of our spirits, is spirit. There is one passage which teaches the doctrine expressly, "God is a spirit;"[2] and this would be sufficient to prove it, if it were taught nowhere else.

It is no objection to the doctrine of God's spirituality, that bodily parts, as hands, feet, eyes, &c., are ascribed to him. These are manifestly mere accommodations of language, because we have no words more suitable to express the operations of the divine mind. If it were inadmissible to speak of God's eyes, because he has not material organs of vision, as we have, it would also be inadmissible to speak of God's seeing, because he does not see by means of material light, as we do; or to speak of God's thinking, because his thoughts are not as our thoughts.

[1] Heb. xii. 9. [2] John iv. 24.

The practical use of this doctrine is taught by Christ: "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."[1] In offering him homage, it is not sufficient to come before him with a bended knee, or a prostrate body; but our minds, our spiritual nature, must render the homage, or it will be unacceptable to him.

The spirituality of God is the foundation of the second commandment in the decalogue: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."[2] The reason assigned for this commandment is, that the Israelites saw no form when God manifested his presence to them at Mount Sinai.[3] He appeared to them in cloud and fire. A pillar of cloud and fire went before the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, as a token of the divine presence. This token appeared at the tabernacle; and afterwards in the temple built and dedicated by Solomon. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. We are not to understand from these things, that God is either cloud or fire. These are material, and not spiritual substances. As what is purely spiritual cannot be perceived by our bodily senses, God was pleased to employ these material symbols to give a sensible demonstration of his presence. For the same reason, he sometimes presented himself in human form. In all these material manifestations of himself, which are recorded in the Old Testament, there is reason to believe that it was the second person in the Godhead, who thus exhibited himself; the same that afterwards appeared in human flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. He is called the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord's presence, and yet he is called Jehovah; and the reverence due to Jehovah is claimed for him. A created angel is not entitled to this name, or this honour; but they both belong to the Son of God, the Angel of the Covenant, who, after his incarnation, was God manifest in the flesh. This opinion is confirmed by the teachings of the New Testament: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."[4] Of the Father, Jesus says, "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen

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[1] John iv. 24. [2] Ex. xx. 4, 5. [3] Deut. iv. 12–18. [4] John i. 18.

his shape;"[1] and he said to his disciples, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."[2] A comparison of these passages may satisfy us, that all the manifestations of the deity to human senses, whether visible or audible, were made in the person of the Son, or Word of God.

The spirituality of God contradicts the pantheistic notion that the universe is God. The universe is not spirit. In its material fabric, intelligence is displayed; but this intelligence does not belong to the material fabric itself, for matter cannot think or know. To present our religious devotions to the universe, is an idolatry not less degrading than that of the most stupid of the heathen nations. They worship stocks and stones; but this philosophy clothes every clod of earth with divinity, and entitles it to our worship. The heathen render divine honors to a few men, whom, for extraordinary merit, they enroll among the gods; but this notion directs our worship to every man, and to every beast of the field. It is a notion perfectly adapted to crush the outflowings of the devotional heart, as they rise to the one, indivisible, spiritual intelligence, to whom alone divine worship is due.

The notion, that God is the Soul of the universe, may not be liable to precisely the same objection. But what does the proposition mean? The only sense in which we can possibly understand that God is the Soul of the universe, is, that he sustains a relation to the universe analogous to that which the human soul sustains to the body with which it is connected. But how extensive is this analogy? The soul did not create the matter of which the body is made; did not form the skilfully wrought parts of the wonderful machinery, or contrive their mysterious movements, which it studies with admiration, and comprehends only in very small part. The soul exercises but a very limited control over the body. The muscles of voluntary motion are under its command, and move at its will; and, in this fact, we may discover a faint analogy to the operation of Him, who worketh *all things* after the counsel of His will, and in whom every creature lives, moves, and has its being. An analogy so meager as this is not sufficient to justify the metaphorical language in which the proposition is stated. Yet, while we reject the proposition, we may derive from it a profitable sug-

[1] John v. 37. [2] John xiv. 9.

gestion. In our intercourse with the myriads of mankind, we perceive and acknowledge, in the movements of every human limb, in the changes of every human countenance, and in the words which fall from every human tongue, the power and intelligence of an operating human soul. Equally obvious, and infinitely more extensive, is the control which God exercises, at every moment, over every part of the universe. With a proper view of God's spirituality, and of his operative control over the world and everything in it, our minds would hold intercourse with his mind, as direct and undoubted as that which we hold with the minds of our fellow-men, and one more constant, and more elevating and delightful.

Section III.—IMMENSITY, OMNIPRESENCE.

God is Everywhere.[1]

Every material thing in the universe is somewhere. The sun has its place; the earth also, and every grain of sand, and every drop of water. The drops of water may change their place perpetually, but every drop has, for each moment, its own place, to the exclusion of all other matter in the universe.

In our conceptions of the human mind we assign place to it also, though in a different manner. We do not attribute to it length, breadth, and thickness, as to a block of marble, which can be measured by feet and inches; but we conceive of it as present in the human body, with which it is connected, and absent from another, with which it is not connected. Each mind is operated on by impressions made on the organs of sense which belong to its own body; and operates by its volitions on the muscles of motion which belong to that body. In this view, we conceive of each mind as present in its own body, and not elsewhere; and we conceive of changing the place of the mind, while its connection with the body continues, only by a change in the place of the body.

When we conceive of finite spiritual beings as angels, we assign to each some place; because his operation, though not confined like that of the human mind, to a particular material body, is nevertheless limited. Such conception accords with the teaching of Scripture, in which angels are represented as moving from place to place, to execute the will of their Sovereign. So the angel

[1] 1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cxxxix. 7; Jer. xxiii. 23.

came to Daniel,[1] and to Peter;[2] and so one is represented as flying through the midst of heaven.[3]

We must not conceive of God's omnipresence as if it were material. We say that the atmosphere is present at every part of the earth's surface; but this is not strictly true. It is not the whole, but merely a small part of the atmosphere, which is present at each place; God is indivisible. We cannot say, that a part of his essence is here, and a part yonder. If this were the mode of God's omnipresence in universal space, he would be infinitely divided, and only an infinitely small part of him would be present at each place. It would not be the whole deity, that takes cognizance of our actions, and listens to our petitions. This notion is unfavorable to piety, and opposed to the true sense of Scripture: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."[4] "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers."[5]

There are passages of Scripture which speak of God's removing from one place to another; of his approaching and departing; of his dwelling in heaven, and of his coming near to his people, and taking up his abode with them. These are manifestly accommodations of language; just as when eyes or hands are attributed to him. They refer to the manifestations of his presence in his various works, and dispensations, in which such changes take place, as are appropriately and impressively expressed by this language.

When we deny a material omnipresence of God, as if his essence were divided and diffused; and when we maintain that the whole deity is everywhere present by his energy and operation, it is not to be understood that we deny the essential omnipresence of God. In whatever manner his essence is present anywhere, it is present everywhere. What the mode of that presence is, we know not. We know not the essence of the human mind, nor the mode of its presence in the body; much less can we comprehend the essence of the infinite God, or the mode of his omnipresence. To that incomprehensible property of his nature, by which he is capable of being wholly present at the same moment, with every one of his creatures, without division of his essence, and without removal from

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[1] Dan. ix. 23. [2] Acts xii. 7. [3] Rev. xiv. 6.
[4] Prov. xv. 3. [5] 1 Pet. iii. 12.

place to place, the name immensity has been given. The essence of God is immense or unmeasured, because it is unmeasurable. It is unmeasurable, because it is spiritual, and, therefore, without such dimensions as may be measured by feet and inches; and because, in whatever sense dimensions may be ascribed to it, these dimensions are boundless. Time has a dimension not to be measured by feet and inches: and we may say of time, that it is omnipresent. The same moment exists in Europe and America, at Saturn, and at the centre of the earth. The omnipresence of time does not explain the omnipresence of God, but it may help us to admit the possibility of omnipresence without division of essence, or removal of place. But the omnipresence of time is not immensity; for time has its measure, and a moment is not eternity.

It is not derogatory to the dignity and glory of God, that he is present everywhere. There are foul places where human beings would prefer not to be; but they do not affect the Deity as they affect men. The sun-beams fall on them without being polluted; and the holy God cannot be contaminated by them. There are scenes of wickedness, from which a good man will turn away with abhorrence, and, in the figurative language of Scripture, God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil:"[1] yet, in another place of scripture, language no less figurative teaches us that the eyes of God behold the evil as well as the good.[2] He witnesses, while he abhors.

A man who sincerely believes the omnipresence of God, cannot be indifferent to religion. To realize that the moral Governor of the universe is ever near, in all his holiness and power, and as much present as if he were nowhere else, must awaken solicitude. When a sense of guilt oppresses, the presence of such a companion becomes intolerable. The guilty man strives to flee from the presence of God, as Jonah did; but the doctrine of God's omnipresence teaches him that the attempt is unavailing. The power of conscience tormenting the guilty man, wherever he goes, is terrible; but the presence of the God against whom he has sinned, and whose wrath he dreads, is still more terrible. To the soul, reconciled to God, the doctrine is full of consolation. In every place, in every condition, to have with us an almighty friend, a

[1] Hab. i. 13. [2] Prov. xv. 3.

kind father, is a source of unspeakable comfort and joy. We need not fear, though we pass through fire or flood, if God be with us. Even in the valley of the shadow of death, we may fear no evil. In every circumstance and trial, it conduces to holiness, to know that God is present.

Section IV.—ETERNITY AND IMMUTABILITY.

God is Eternal.[1]

In our knowledge of the objects which surround us, we include not only their present state, but their continued existence, and the changes which they undergo. Some things pass before our eyes, as visions of the moment; others, as the rocks, the sun, the stars, outlast many generations of men. Few living creatures remain in life as long as man; but the shortness of his life is a subject of daily remark, and of impressive scriptural representation.[2] The duration of the deity is exhibited in contrast thus: "Lord, make me know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing BEFORE THEE."[3] A thousand years, include many of the ordinary generations of mankind; yet, in comparison with God's duration, they are said to be "as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."[4] To-morrow, while future, may appear to our view, as a duration of considerable length; but yesterday, when it is past, how short it is! An hour of the day, filled with a great variety of incidents, which it might require many hours to narrate, is lengthened out in our view; but how short, how contracted is a watch of the night, in which we sleep and awake, and know not that time has passed! Such, to the view of God, is the long period of a thousand years. To heighten our conception of God's eternity, it is contrasted with the duration of those natural things which appear to possess the greatest stability: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment: and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy

[1] Deut. xxxii. 40; xxxiii. 27; Ps. ix. 7; xc. 2; cii. 27; cxlvi. 10; Isaiah lvii. 15; lxiii. 16; Jer. x. 10; Lam. v. 19; 1 Tim. i. 17.

[2] 1 Chron. xxix. 15; Job vii. 6; Job ix. 25, 26. [3] Ps. xxxix. 4, 5. [4] Ps. xc. 4.

years shall not fail."[1] But when we have enlarged our conceptions to the utmost, they still utterly fail to comprehend the vast subject. We stretch our thoughts backward and forward; but no beginning or end of God's existence appears. To relieve our overstretched imagination, and to stop the unavailing effort to comprehend what is incomprehensible, we bring in the negative idea—no beginning, no end. Duration without beginning and without end, becomes the expression of God's eternity.

That every thing, except God, had a beginning, is a doctrine of revelation: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.[2] This doctrine, philosophy cannot contradict, and perhaps cannot fully demonstrate. But there are manifestations of design, even in unorganized matter, in the kinds and quantities that exist, and the uses to which they are adapted. If matter is eternal, or a production of chance, why is it not all of one kind; and why are the kinds of it, and the proportionate quantities of each, so apparently the result of design? Revelation answers this by the declaration, "In wisdom thou hast made them all.[3]

In contemplating God as the First Cause, we consider his existence uncaused. As we look back through duration past, till we find one existence that is without beginning, so we look back through the long chain of effect and cause, till we have found one existence that is without cause. Sometimes, however, the conception is clothed in language that has not merely negative import. Not satisfied with the merely negative idea, *without cause*, learned men labor to assign a cause for God's existence, and represent it as the cause of itself, or as including its cause within itself. They express this, by saying, that God is self-existent. This mode of expression accommodates our tendency to philosophize; but it perhaps conveys no other intelligible idea, than that God's existence is without cause.

Another philosophical expression, *God necessarily exists*, seems to possess some deep meaning; but when we labor to explore its depths, we shall, perhaps, find in it no other intelligible idea, than that God exists, and has always existed. His existence has always rendered his non-existence impossible, because it is impossible for anything to be, and not to be, at the same time. If philo-

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[1] Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. [2] Gen. i. 1. [3] Ps. civ. 24.

sophy goes behind the existence of God, in search of a cause necessitating his being, she wanders out of her proper province. We may permit her to trace the relation of cause and effect, as far as that relation is to be found; but when she has arrived at the uncaused existence of the eternal One, we should say to her, thus far shalt thou go, and no further.

The eternity of God has been defined, existence without beginning, without end, and without succession. Time with us, is past, present, and future; but God's existence is believed to be a perpetual now. The subject is beyond our comprehension; but it is most reasonable to conclude, that God's mode of existence differs from ours, as it respects time, as well as space; and that, as he exists equally at every point of space, without division of his immensity, so he equally exists at every moment of time, without division of his eternity. Possibly this may be intimated in the Scripture phrase, "inhabiteth eternity."[1] We dwell in time, a habitation with its various apartments; and we pass from one to another in order; but God's habitation is undivided eternity. Our lifetime has its parts, childhood, boyhood, manhood, and old age; but God's life is as indivisible as his essence.

God is Unchangeable.[2]

The doctrine of God's eternity, and that of his unchangeableness, are nearly allied to each other; and if his eternity excludes succession, it must also exclude the possibility of change. Unchangeableness applies not only to his essence, but also to his attributes. His spirituality is ever the same, his omnipresence the same, and so of the rest. His purpose, also, is unchangeable; it is called "his eternal purpose."[3] He says: "My counsel shall stand."[4] He is said, in Scripture, to repent; but, in the same chapter[5] in which it is twice said that God repented, it is also stated: "He is not a man, that he should repent." We cannot suppose that the sacred writer intended to contradict himself palpably in the compass of a few verses. In accommodation to our modes of speaking, God is said to repent when he effects such a change in his work as would, in human actions, proceed from repentance. Repentance, in men, implies grief of mind, and change of work. The former is

[1] Is. lvii. 15.

[2] Num. xxiii. 19; Ps. cii. 27; Mal. iii. 6; Heb. i. 12; xiii. 8; Jas. i. 17.

[3] Eph. iii. 11. [4] Is. xlvi. 10. [5] 1 Sam. xv.

inconsistent with the perfection of God, but the latter is not. To destroy the world by the deluge, no more implied a change in God than to create it at first. Each act effected a great change, but in both God remained unchanged. No other language could so impressively represent God's abhorrence of man's wickedness to be the cause of the deluge, as that used by the sacred historian: "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."[1]

When we contemplate the shortness of human life, and the incessant change of everything with which we have to do on earth, and of ourselves, as we pass from the cradle to the grave, we may well exclaim, as we look up to the eternal and unchangeable God, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him." A sense of our comparative nothingness is eminently conducive to humility. A view of God's eternity and unchangeableness is necessary to the due exercise of confidence in him. It is folly to trust in uncertain riches, and in the things which perish in the using of them; but we wisely put our trust in the living God. The men with whom we converse are passing away; the condition of life is perpetually changing; we are, in all our relations to earthly things, as if we were on the surface of a restless ocean; but God is as a rock amidst the fluctuating waters; and, while we repose unshaken confidence in him, our feet stand firmly, and we can look without dismay on the troubled scene around us. Men of age receive our reverence, and the counsels of their long experience are highly prized. Who will not reverence the Ancient of Days, the eternal God; and who will reject the counsel of Him, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"?[2]

The immutability of God has been made a pretext for restraining prayer before him; but this is wrong. Even if the giving or withholding of the blessings desired were unaffected by the prayer, there still remains sufficient reason for perseverance in offering the petition. The devotional feeling is acceptable to God, and profitable to the soul. If prayer will not bring God to the soul, it will, at least, bring the soul to God. A man in a boat, on a dangerous water, may be saved by means of a rope thrown to him from the shore. When he pulls, though the rock to which the other end of

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[1] Gen. vi. 6. [2] Micah v. 2.

the rope may be fastened does not come to the boat, the boat comes to the rock. So prayer brings the soul to God.

But it is not true, that the giving or withholding of the blessing desired is unaffected by the petition presented. Though God is unchangeable, his operation changes in its effect on his creatures, according to their changing character and circumstances. The same sun hardens clay and softens wax. Adam was in God's favor before he sinned; but afterwards was under his displeasure. When a man becomes converted, he is removed from under the wrath of God into a state of favor with him, and all things now work together for his good. In all this, God changes not. God has, in time past, bestowed blessings in answer to prayer, and his unchangeableness encourages the hope that he will do so in time to come. His whole plan has been so arranged, in his infinite wisdom, that many of his blessings are bestowed only in answer to prayer. The connection between the prayer and the bestowment of the blessing, is as fixed by the divine appointment as that between cause and effect in natural things. The unchangeableness of God, therefore, instead of being a reason for restraining prayer, renders prayer indispensable; for our weak petitions have their effect with God, according to his immutable purpose; and, to deny the possibility of this, would be to deny the efficacy of Christ's intercession.

Section V.—OMNISCIENCE.

God knows all things.[1]

In their stupidity, men have worshipped gods of wood and stone, which, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not; but the deity that the Bible makes known, is a God of knowledge.[2] Even natural religion teaches that the maker and governor of the world must possess intelligence; and the degrading idolatry which worshipped birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things, was contrary to reason, as well as to revelation.

The mode of God's knowledge we cannot comprehend. Scripture and reason unite in teaching that his thoughts are not as our thoughts. We derive our best conception of his knowledge from our own mental operations; but we ought to be careful not to think

[1] Job xxxvii. 16; Ps. cxlvii. 5; Is. xlii. 9; xlvi. 9, 10; Acts i. 24; Rom. xi. 33; Heb. iv. 13; 1 John iii. 20.

[2] 1 Sam. ii. 3.

of him as altogether such an one as ourselves. As he differs from all creatures, in mode of presence and of duration, so he differs, in mode of knowledge, from all other intelligent beings.

God does not *acquire* knowledge after our mode. We acquire knowledge of external objects by means of our bodily senses; but God has no body, and no organs of sense like ours. We learn the less obvious relations of things by processes of reasoning, which are often tedious and laborious, but God has no labor to acquire knowledge, and suffers no delay in attaining it. All things are naked, and open to his eyes.[1] We learn much by the testimony of others; but God is not dependent for knowledge on information received from any of his creatures. We obtain knowledge of our own mental operations by means of consciousness; and, as this is without any process of reasoning, and not by our bodily senses, or the testimony of others, it may give us the best possible conception of God's mode of knowledge. All things which he knows are before his mind as immediately and completely as the states and operations of our minds are before our consciousness; but our best conceptions fall infinitely short of the incomprehensible subject. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts higher than our thoughts.[2]

God does not *hold* his knowledge *in possession*, after our mode. The great store-house of our knowledge is memory, a wonderful faculty, with which the human mind is endowed. Without it, all knowledge would pass from the mind, as the image passes from a mirror, when the object producing it has gone by. But if God's duration is without succession, there is, with him, no past to remember; and therefore memory, with him, is something wholly different from what it is with us. His whole mode of life differs so widely from ours, that we cannot attribute human faculties to him, without degrading his divinity.

In our study of God's attributes, it is important to remember, at every step of our progress, that they are all incomprehensible to us. We should do this, not only for the sake of humility, but to guard us against erroneous inferences, which we are liable to draw from our imperfect conceptions of the divine nature. It is instructive to notice how far the elements of these conceptions are

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[1] Heb. iv. 13. [2] Is. lv. 9.

derived from what we know of our own minds. No combination of such elements can possibly give us adequate conceptions of the eternal and infinite Mind. Even the Holy Scriptures, which reveal God to us, do not supply the elementary conceptions necessary to a perfect knowledge of God. They speak to human beings in human language, and the knowledge which they impart is sufficient for our present necessities, and able to make us wise to salvation; but we should remember, that human language cannot express to us what the human mind cannot conceive, and, therefore, cannot convey a full knowledge of the deity.

Much of human knowledge consists of mere negations. Frequent exemplifications of this occur in our study of the divine attributes. What God's spirituality is, we cannot positively know; but we know that it is *not* matter. What God's eternity is, we cannot comprehend; but, in our labor to comprehend it, we stretch our positive conception of duration to the utmost possible extent, and at length seek relief in the negative ideas — without beginning, without end, without succession. These negations mark the imperfection of our knowledge. God's knowledge is direct and positive, and he seeks no relief in the negations that we find so convenient.

God does not *use* his knowledge after our mode. For the proper directing of actions, knowledge is necessary, both of things actually existing, and of things, the existence of which is merely possible. Our minds possess both these kinds of knowledge to a limited extent, and use them in an imperfect manner. In the study of history and geography we acquire knowledge of things which are, or have been, in actual existence. Arithmetic treats of number, and geometry of magnitude; but these sciences do not teach the actual existence of anything. By reasoning from the abstract relations and properties of things, our minds are capable of determining what would, or might exist, in supposed cases; and, by this process, our knowledge extends into the department of things possible. This knowledge is necessary to choice; and, therefore, to voluntary action. If but one thing were possible, there would be no room for choice; and we must know the things possible, before we can choose. God has perfect knowledge of things possible, and these depend on his power. He has, also, perfect knowledge of things actual, and these depend on his will. He knew how many worlds he could create, and how many kinds of plants

and animals; and out of these he chose what worlds, plants, and animals, should exist. According to our mode of conception, the knowledge of things possible precedes the will or purpose of God, and the knowledge of things actual follows it. But we dare not affirm that there is any succession of thought in the divine mind. How God uses his knowledge, in counsel, or in action, we cannot comprehend.

The EXTENT of God's knowledge is unlimited. He knows all things; all things possible, and all things actual. He knows himself perfectly, though unknown by any other being. The attributes which we labor in vain to comprehend, he understands fully. His ways, to us unsearchable, are fully known to him from the beginning of his works. All creatures are known to him, and everything that appertains to them: the angels of heaven, the men who inhabit the earth, and every living thing, even to the sparrow, or young ravens, he knows, and carefully regards. The thoughts of the mind he understands, and the secrets of every heart he fully searches.

All events, past, present, or future, are known to God. Past events are said to be remembered by him; and he claims the foreknowledge of future events, challenging false gods to a comparison with him in this respect.[1] His foreknowledge of future events is proved by the numerous predictions contained in the Bible, that have proceeded from him. It was given to the Israelites,[2] as a rule for distinguishing a true prophet of the Lord, that his predictions should be fulfilled; but a foreknowledge of future events could not be imparted to them from the Lord, if the Lord himself did not possess it.

The *mode* of God's *foreknowledge* we cannot comprehend. He sees present things not as man sees, and remembers the past not in he manner of human memory. It is, therefore, not surprising that we cannot comprehend the mode of his knowledge; and especially of his foreknowledge, in which we, least of all, resemble him. We have some knowledge of the present and the past; but of the future we have no absolute knowledge. We know causes at present existing, from which we infer that future events will take place; but an absolute foreknowledge of these future events we do not

[1] Is. xli. 22. [2] Deut. xviii. 22.

possess. Some cause, of which we are now not aware, may intervene, and disappoint our expectation. The phenomena of nature, which we expect with the greatest confidence, such as the rising of the sun, the occurrence of an eclipse, are foreknown only on the condition that the present laws of nature shall continue to operate, without change or suspension. But the Author of Nature may interpose, and change the present order of things. On the supposition that God has a perfect knowledge of all the causes now operating; that there are fixed laws which determine the succession of events; and that God perfectly understands these laws; we may comprehend that God can infallibly predict things to come. No being but himself can interfere with the order of things which he has established. This mode of foreknowledge we can, in some measure, conceive; but the supposition which it involves, that all events take place according to an established order of sequence, many are unwilling to admit. They maintain that events dependent on the volitions of free agents, do not so occur; and, therefore, cannot be foreknown after this manner.

Some, who adopt the view last mentioned, deny that God foreknows future events, dependent on human volitions. They nevertheless attribute omniscience to him, and understand it to be *the power of knowing all things*. They say that, as omnipotence signifies a power to do all things, without the doing of them, so omniscience signifies the power to know all things, without the knowing of them. There is clearly a mistake here in language. As omnipotence signifies all power, so omniscience signifies all knowledge; and God does not possess omniscience, if he possesses merely the power to know, without the knowledge itself. But it may be questioned, whether, according to the theory, God has even the power to know. The power of God might have excluded such contingencies from existence; but, after having opened the door, it is difficult to understand how any power could foreknow, what things will enter, if they are in their nature unforeknowable. But the strongest possible objection lies against the theory, in that it is opposed to fact. God has predicted very many events dependent on innumerable volitions of free agents, and, therefore, must have foreknown them. Those who have advocated this theory, in connection with the opinion, that the duration of God is an eternal now, and that there is strictly speaking, neither foreknowledge nor

after-knowledge with him; fix narrow limits to the divine omniscience. If God's knowledge is unchangeable, and if he has no foreknowledge of contingencies, he can have no after-knowledge of them. But the whole history of mankind is dependent on contingencies; being filled with them, and events depending on them. All this must be a blank to the view of God. Men may know this history, and it may be written out in ten thousand volumes; but God knows it not, for, though he possesses the power to know, he has determined not to exercise it. How then shall God judge the world?

Human beings have two modes of knowing past events; one, by memory; the other, by inferring their existence from the effects which have followed. One man remembers that a house was burned down, having seen the flames of its combustion; another knows that it was burned down, because he sees its ashes. In one mode, memory runs back along the line of time; in the other, reason runs back along the line of cause and effect. The only mode which we have of knowing future events, is by the reasoning process. Whether God has a method, analogous rather to our memory or perception, than to our reason; it is impossible for us to determine. If he has, we cannot conceive of it, because there is nothing like it in ourselves; but the absence of such a power in us, by no means proves its non-existence in God. Some have imagined that God looks down the vista of time, and sees future events, as we see a traveller approaching when he is yet at a distance from us. But the cases are not analogous. We see the traveller *coming*, not *having come;* what is present, as to time, and not what is future. His arrival, the future event, we know only by a process of reasoning. The supposition is, that God has an immediate perception of the future event, without any intervening process of reasoning. To say that he sees it, expresses this figuratively, but does not explain it.

The doctrine that there is no succession in the eternity of God, neither denies nor explains his foreknowledge. 1. *It does not deny.* Some have maintained that there is, strictly speaking, neither foreknowledge nor after-knowledge with God; and this may be admitted, if foreknowledge necessarily implies succession of thought. But the foreknowledge which we attribute to God, is not knowledge antecedent to something else in the divine mind, but knowledge antecedent to the event foreknown. From God's knowledge pre-

dictions of future events have proceeded. Such knowledge, in a human mind, would be foreknowledge; and, in human language, this is its proper name. 2. *It does not explain.* The doctrine teaches that all times and events, past, present, and future, are alike present to God. The overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus, and the prediction thereof by Isaiah, are both historical events; and, as such, are supposed to have been alike present to the mind of God from the beginning of the world. Now, the fact that the overthrow was present to the mind of God, could not be the cause of the revelation made to the prophet, and of the prediction which followed; for, according to the doctrine, the prediction was already as much present to the mind of God as the event predicted; and, therefore, its existence must be as much presupposed in the order of cause and effect. Hence, to account for this, or any other prediction, we are compelled to admit that God has a mode of foreknowledge, into the nature of which the doctrine of the perpetual now gives us no insight.

But why should we indulge ourselves in vain speculations, or exhaust ourselves with needless efforts? We are like children who wade into the ocean, to learn its depth by the measure of their little stature, and who exclaim, almost at their first step, O! how deep! Even Paul, when laboring to fathom this subject, exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"[1]

In comparison with God's infinite intelligence, how little is all human knowledge! We honor Newton, and other giants of intellect that have appeared in the progress of our race; but their highest glory was, to know a very little of God's ways. Let every power of our minds bend before his infinite understanding, with deep humility and devout adoration. We study our own minds, and find in them much that we cannot explain; and when we use the little knowledge of them to which we can attain, in our labored efforts to understand something of God, an important part of its use consists in convincing us that we cannot find out God, and that his thoughts are not as our thoughts.

As intelligent beings, we may contemplate the omniscience of

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[1] Rom. xi. 33.

God with devout admiration; and as guilty beings, we should fear and tremble before it. He sees the inmost recesses of the heart. The hateful thoughts which we are unwilling a fellow-worm should know, are all known to him, and every thought, word, and deed, he remembers, and will bring into judgment. How terrible is this attribute of the Great Judge, who will expose the secrets of every heart, and reward every man according to his works, though unobserved or forgotten by men!

But with all the *awe* which invests it, this attribute of the Divine Nature, is delightful to the pious man. He rejoices to say, Thou, God, seest me. He prays, Try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me into the way everlasting. Gladly he commits himself to the guidance of him who has all knowledge. Conscious of his own blindness and darkness, he knows not which way to take, or what is best for him; but he puts himself, with unwavering confidence, into the hands of the omniscient God.

Section VI.—OMNIPOTENCE.

God is able to do whatever he pleases.[1]

Our first idea of power, is probably derived from the control which we possess over our muscles, and the use which we make of them, to produce effects on things about us. Our limbs and voice become the instruments of our power; and, in the using of them for effecting our purpose, the notion of power arises. We transfer this notion, and incorporate it into the conception which we form of other intelligent beings like ourselves; and it thus becomes an element in our conception of the deity. In the material world, causes are followed by their effects in a manner similar to that in which effects are produced by the motion of our limbs; and the material causes are said to have power. It is thus we speak of the power of steam, or of an engine.

We know well that our power is limited. Many things which we attempt we fail to accomplish. To conceive of omnipotence, we introduce, as in other cases, the negative idea, *without fail.* This, however, does not exclude the idea of attempt, desire, or will. It derogates nothing from the omnipotence of God, that he does not accomplish what he has no desire or will to accomplish. It is im-

[1] Gen. xvii. 1; Job. v. 9; Jer. xxxii. 17; Matt. xix. 26; Rev. i. 8; xix. 6.

possible for God to lie, or to deny himself; but these are things which he does not please to do, because they are inconsistent with his moral perfections. Nor would the doing of these things be any indication of supreme power. It is also true, that God cannot do things which imply contradiction in themselves; as, to make a thing to be, and not to be, at the same time; to make a circle to be at the same time a square, &c. If finite power fails to accomplish such things, it fails not because it is finite, but because the things are impossible. No measure of power could come nearer to success. Impotence is as good as omnipotence for accomplishing impossibilities.

We are filled with awe in contemplating the omnipotence of God. When we hear the voice of his thunder in the heavens, or feel the earth quake under the tread of his foot, how do solemn thoughts of things divine fill our minds! From the rending cloud, and the quaking earth, let us look back to the power which brought creation into being, and forward to that display of his power which we are to witness on the last day. Such a being, who will not fear? Our minds exercise their power through our bodies, to which, therefore, the immediate exercise of it is limited; and even over these the power is confined within narrow limits; for we cannot add one cubit to our stature, or make one hair white or black. But God has everything in the universe under his immediate and perfect control. He needs no instruments, no mechanical aid, no series of contrivances; but, at his will the thing is done, whether it be the production of an animalcule, or the creation of a world. At our will, a finger moves; but at the volition of God, a planet is launched in its orbit, with a force of which the cannon-ball gives but a very faint conception. Hurricanes, which sweep the earth, and lift up the dwellings, and the very bodies of men, in the air, have their power. The ocean, which sports with mighty ships, has its power. The volcano, which bursts forth with such awful grandeur, has its power. But when we have combined the force of air, ocean, and subterranean fire, we must multiply it by the number of such agencies which are operating, through all the worlds in the whole of God's vast empire, before we can begin to conceive adequately of his omnipotence. Lo, these are parts of his ways; but the thunder of his power, who can understand?[1]

[1] Job xxvi. 14.

Section VII.—GOODNESS.

God is Infinitely Benevolent.[1]

God's goodness, as exercised towards his creatures, is often expressed in the Scriptures by the term love. Love is distinguished as benevolence, beneficence, or complacence. Benevolence is love in intention or disposition; beneficence is love in action, or conferring its benefits; and complacence is the approbation of good actions or dispositions. Goodness, exercised toward the unworthy, is called grace; toward the suffering, it is called pity, or mercy. The latter term intimates that the suffering, or liability to suffer, arises from the just displeasure of God.

Goodness implies a disposition to produce happiness. We are conscious of pleasure and pain in ourselves, and we know that we can, to some extent, cause pleasure or pain in others. Continued pleasure is happiness; continued pain, misery. God is able to produce happiness or misery, when, and to whatever extent he pleases. Which of these is it the disposition of his infinite nature to produce?

God's goodness may be argued from the manifestations of it in the works of creation. The world is peopled with sentient beings, capable of pleasure; and sources of pleasure are everywhere provided for them. Every sense of every animal is an inlet of pleasure; and for every sense the means of pleasure are provided. What God gives them they gather. His open hand pours enjoyments into their existence at every moment. When we consider the innumerable living creatures that are, at this moment, receiving pleasure from the abundant and varied stores which his creating power has furnished; and when we reflect, that this stream of bounty has flowed incessantly from the creation of the world, we may well consider the fountain from which it has descended as infinite.

It demonstrates the goodness of God, that the pleasures which his creatures enjoy do not come incidentally, but are manifestly the result of contrivance. Food would nourish without the pleasure experienced in eating. We might have been so constituted as to

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[1] Ex. xxxiv. 6; Ps. ciii. 2–8; Zech. ix. 17; Matt. vii. 11; Luke ii. 14; xii. 32; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 8.

be driven to take it by hunger, and to receive it with pain, but little less than that produced by the want of it. But God has superadded pleasure where it was not absolutely necessary, and has made the very support of animal existence a source of perpetual gratification.

It adds greatly to the force of this argument, that indications of malevolent design are not found in the works of God. Pain is, indeed, often experienced, but it never appears to result from an arrangement specially made for receiving it. There is no organ of our body to which we can point, and say, this was specially designed to give us pain.

Mere animal enjoyment is not the highest that God bestows. To his intelligent creatures he has opened another source in the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. We need knowledge, as well as food; and we might be driven to seek it by a painful necessity, without deriving any pleasure from it. But here, again, the benevolence of the Creator is manifested. Pleasure is superadded when we acquire necessary knowledge; and, when the progress has reached the limit of our necessities, the pleasure does not cease. The intellectual appetite is never satiated to loathing.

But God has made us susceptible of far higher and nobler pleasure in the exercise of virtue and religion. To this he has adapted our moral nature, rendering us capable both of the exercise and the enjoyment. For the exercise of virtue and religion, the constitution of human society, and the various relations which we sustain in its organization, furnish abundant occasion; and in the moral sense of mankind, and the approbation which virtue extorts, even when the tribute is not spontaneously rendered, a source of enjoyment is opened. In the proper exercise of our moral powers, we are capable of loving and enjoying God; and, therefore, of experiencing a happiness that infinitely transcends all other enjoyment. This ocean of infinite fulness, this source of eternal and exhaustless happiness, gives the full demonstration of God's infinite goodness. And this enjoyment, also, never cloys; but, with the progress, the delight increases.

The doctrine of God's goodness, notwithstanding the abundance of its proofs, is attended with difficulties. Though sentient beings are not furnished with organs purposely prepared for the receiving of pain, they have organs for inflicting it, which are unquestion-

ably the result of contrivance. The fangs of serpents, and the stings of insects, are instances of this kind; and to these may be added the talons and tusks, or beaks, with which carnivorous animals rend their prey. How is the existence of such pain-inflicting contrivances to be reconciled with the infinite goodness of God? How can we explain, in harmony with this doctrine, the suffering which animals endure from the violence of each other, from hunger, cold, and disease? Above all, how can we reconcile the innumerable miseries with which human society is filled, in every rank and condition of life? If God is infinitely good, why is human life begun in pain, and closed in pain, and subject to pain throughout its whole course?

These difficulties are of too much magnitude to be overlooked. They perplex the understanding, and disquiet the heart; and, therefore, demand a careful and candid consideration. The following observations are offered, to guard the heart against their influence.

1. Admit the existence of the difficulties in their full force, and what then? Does it follow that God is a malevolent being? Were he so, the proofs of his malevolence would abound, as those of his goodness now do. We should everywhere find animal senses adapted to be the inlets of misery, and the objects of these senses all adapted to give pain. Does it follow that God is indifferent whether his creatures are happy or miserable? The numerous provisions which are made with a manifest reference to animal enjoyment, forbid this supposition. Does it follow that God is capricious? This conclusion is precluded by the fact, that what suffering there is in the world, runs throughout along with its enjoyments; the happiness and the misery are entwined with each other, and form parts of the same system. By summing up the whole, we discover that animal life has more enjoyment than suffering, and that its pains are, in most cases, incidental. In our daily experience, blessings are poured upon us incessantly; and when suffering comes, we are often conscious that it arises from our abuse of God's goodness, and is, therefore, no argument against it. In many other cases, we find present suffering conducive to future good; and we have reason to believe that it would always be so, if we endured it with a proper spirit, and made a wise improvement of it. It becomes us, therefore, when sufferings occur, the bene-

ficial tendency of which we cannot discover, to remember that we comprehend but a very small part of God's way. We have found every other attribute of his nature incomprehensible to us, and it ought not to surprise us that his goodness is so.

The sufferings which we experience in ourselves, or see in others, become an occasion for the trial of our faith. To the understanding of a child, the discipline of his father may appear neither wise nor kind. Indulgences which are craved may be denied; and toils and privations, exceedingly unwelcome, may be imposed. In these circumstances, it is the child's duty to confide where it cannot comprehend. So we should exercise faith in the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father, and believe that his ways are full of goodness, even when they are inscrutable. Enough of his goodness is seen elsewhere to satisfy us of its existence when mystery hides it from view.

2. It cannot be proved that an admixture of pain with the large measure of enjoyment which God bestows on his creatures, is inconsistent with his goodness. The insect of a day, and the immortal near the throne of God, derive their enjoyment from the same infinite goodness. If the short-lived insect should pass its few hours in the sunbeams without pain, and should be annihilated without pain, the difficulty which now embarrasses us would not apply to its case. Its existence, filled with enjoyment, would correspond with our notions of the Creator's goodness; and the finiteness, or very small measure of its enjoyment, would not disprove the source to be infinite from which it proceeds. Now, if a creature of another kind should have enjoyments a hundred fold greater, with an abatement of one measure of pain, its existence, on the whole, is ninety-nine times more desirable than that of the insect. Shall we, then, deny that this existence proceeds from the goodness of the deity? If the pain forms a part of the same system with the pleasure, we must attribute them to the same author; and the animal that has ninety-nine measures of enjoyment remaining, has no more right to complain of the abatement of one by the endurance of pain, than the insect supposed would have to complain of the absence of ninety-nine measures which the more favored creature enjoys. This consideration may satisfy us that the presence of some pain, connected with a far greater amount of enjoyment, is not inconsistent with the doctrine that God is infinitely good.

Furthermore, it is perfectly conceivable that pain itself may, in some cases, enhance our pleasures, as relief from suffering renders subsequent enjoyment more exquisite: and, in other ways, which we are unable to comprehend, pain may produce a beneficial result. In this view, the existence of pain cannot be inconsistent with the goodness of God.

3. Much of the suffering in the world is clearly the effect of sin, and is to be considered an infliction of divine justice. The justice of God claims scope for its exercise, as well as his goodness. The goodness of God is infinite, if it confers happiness as widely as is consistent with the other perfections of his nature. It is a favorite theory with some, that God aims at the greatest possible amount of happiness in the universe; and that he admits evil, only because the admission of evil produces in the end a greater amount of happiness than its exclusion would have done. According to this theory, justice itself is a modification of benevolence; and the pain suffered by one being, is inflicted from love to the whole. But whether justice be a modification of benevolence, or a distinct attribute, its claims must be regarded; and goodness does not cease to be goodness, because it does not overthrow the government of God, or oppose his other perfections.

Some persons attribute all the sufferings of brute animals to the sin of man, but the Scriptures do not clearly teach this doctrine; and we have shown that the pain which brutes endure, may be otherwise reconciled with the goodness of God. That animals suffer because of man's sin, is clear in the cruelty which they often experience from human hands; but that all their sufferings proceed from this cause is not so clear. Unless the order of things was greatly changed at the fall of man, hawks had their claws and beaks from the day they were created, and used them before man sinned, in taking and devouring other birds for food; and, therefore, pain and death, in brute animals, did not enter the world by the sin of man. Brute animals have, on the whole, a happy existence. Free from anxiety, remorse, and the fear of death, they enjoy, with high relish, the pleasures which their Creator has given them; and it is not the less a gift of his infinite goodness, because it is limited in quantity, or abated by some mixture of pain.

4. It may be, that God's goodness is not mere love of happiness In his view, happiness may not be the only good, or even the chief

good. He is himself perfectly happy; yet this perfection of his nature is not presented to us, in his word, as the only ground, or even the chief ground, on which his claim to divine honor and worship rests. The hosts of heaven ascribe holiness to him, and worship him because of it; but not because of his happiness. If we could contemplate him as supremely happy, but deriving his happiness from cruelty, falsehood, and injustice, we should need a different nature from that with which he has endowed us, and a different Bible to direct us from that which he has given, before we could render him sincere and heart-felt adoration. In the regulation of our conduct, when pleasure and duty conflict with each other, we are required to choose the latter; and this is often made the test of our obedience. On the same principle, if a whole life of duty and a whole life of enjoyment were set before us, that we might choose between them, we should be required to prefer holiness to happiness. It therefore accords with the judgment of God not to regard happiness as the chief good; and the production of the greatest possible amount of happiness could not have been his prime object in the creation of the world. We may conclude that his goodness is not a weak fondness which indulges his creatures, and administers to their enjoyment, regardless of their conduct and moral character. It aims at their happiness, but in subordination to a higher and nobler purpose. According to the order of things which he has established, it is rendered impossible for an unholy being to be happy, and this order accords with the goodness of God, which aims, not at the mere happiness of his universe, but at its well-being, in the best possible sense.

If these views are correct, the miseries which sin has introduced into the world, instead of disproving the goodness of God, proceed from it, and demonstrate it. They are means used by the great Father of all, in the discipline of his great family, to deter from the greatest of all evils. Precisely this use the wisdom from above teaches us to make of his judgments and threatenings; and when these awful means have taught us the evil of sin, and have been blessed to us as means of sanctification, we may perceive in them a manifestation of God's goodness.

5. To infer the infinitude of God's goodness from its effects, we must view them in the aggregate. The perfection of his justice appears in its minute and precise adaptation to each particular

case. Every part of his administration must, when brought to the line of rectitude for comparison, be found to agree with it precisely. But as in estimating the length of a line, we do not examine its parts, so the infinitude of God's goodness must be judged from the aggregate of its effects, as we learn the power of God, not from a single grain of sand, but from the whole extent of creation.

To comprehend this vast subject, we need the infinite mind of God himself. In events which now appear to us dark and mysterious, the seeds of future benefits to his creatures may be wrapped up, which will bring forth their fruit hereafter, for the use of admiring and adoring intelligences. The parts of the great system are so wonderfully adjusted to each other, that no finite being dare say that this is useless, or that pernicious or hurtful. Why God has made precisely such orders of creatures as inhabit the world with us, and why he has appointed to them their various modes of life, with the advantages and inconveniences peculiar to each, we are wholly unable to say; and, if we undertake to say why he has made any creatures at all, we may assign a reason which we think we understand, but of which, in reality, we know but little. If the united intelligence of the universe could lift up its voice to God, as the voice of one creature, and say, "Why hast thou made me thus?" it would be daring impiety. How unbecoming then for man, who is a worm, to arraign the wisdom and goodness of his Maker!

The goodness of God is the attribute of his nature, which, above all others, draws forth the affection of our hearts. We are filled with awe at his eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence; but we can imagine all these attributes connected with moral qualities which would render them repulsive. But the goodness of God, while it is awful and grand, is at the same time powerfully attractive. It is this, when understood in its proper sense, not as the mere love of happiness, that renders Jehovah the proper centre of the moral universe. It is this that attracts the hearts of all holy intelligences now in heaven, and that is drawing to that high and holy place whatever on earth is most lovely and excellent; and if the hearts of any repel this centre, and recede further from it, they are "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

Section VIII.—TRUTH.

God is a being of inviolable truth.[1]

The truth of God includes veracity and faithfulness: — veracity in his declaration of things as they are, and faithfulness in the exact fulfilment of his promises and threatenings. Men often err in their testimony from mistake of facts, and fail through inability to fulfil promises which they have made with honest intentions. The omniscience of God renders mistake with him impossible; and his omnipotence and unchangeableness render the fulfilment of his intentions certain. Truth, as a moral attribute, is the agreement of what is spoken with the mind of the speaker. We never charge men with want of veracity, when they err in their testimony through mere mistake; or with want of faithfulness, when they fail to fulfil their promises entirely from inability. God's testimony is true, because it agrees perfectly with his view of things, and that this view agrees with the actual state of things, results, not from his truth, but his omniscience. His promises are true because they agree precisely with his intentions; and that these intentions are exactly fulfilled, results from other attributes, as has been explained. Truth is understood for the most part to refer to something spoken or written; but the truth of God may be understood, in a wider sense, to denote the agreement of all the revelations or manifestations which he has made of himself, with his mind and character.

Because God's manifestations of himself are true, it does not follow that they are complete and perfect. He showed his glory to Moses; but it was only a part of his glory that he exhibited, because Moses was unable to bear the full display. All manifestations to his creatures are necessarily limited; and they are made as seems good in his sight. Our knowledge of God, which is necessarily imperfect because of our weakness, is often erroneous, through our misuse of the manifestations which he has made. So the heathen world, when they knew God, glorified him not as God, but changed the truth of God into a lie.

When men abuse the knowledge of God which they possess, and

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[1] Deut. xxxii. 4; Ps. cxix. 142; John viii. 26; Rom. iii. 4; Tit. i. 2; Heb. vi. 18; Rev. iii. 7.

the means of knowledge which he has afforded them, it is not inconsistent with his character to give them up, in righteous judgment, to their own hearts' lusts. Because they receive not the love of the truth, God shall send them strong delusions,[1] that they should believe a lie. So Ahab desired a false prophecy, and his prophets desired to gratify him, and God gave him up to be deceived.[2] This is expressed, in the prophetic imagery of Scripture, by his sending a lying spirit into the prophets. Ahab was deceived; but it was in spite of the true word of God, by the prophet whom he rejected. Jeremiah complains that God had deceived him; but this, in the most unfavorable construction that can be put on his language, amounts to nothing more than an impatient exclamation of the prophet, under a severe trial.

We can have no knowledge of God, except by the manifestations he has made of himself. When we receive these, however made, as expressing to us the mind and character of God, we exercise faith in God But when we close our understandings and hearts against these manifestations, or, through disrelish of them, misinterpret them in any manner, we are guilty of the great sin of unbelief, which rejects the testimony of God, and makes him a liar.

Section IX.—JUSTICE.

God is perfectly just.[3]

Justice consists in giving to every one his due. It has been distinguished into Commutative and Distributive. Commutative Justice is fair dealing in the exchange of commodities, and belongs to commerce. Distributive Justice rewards or punishes men according to their actions, and appertains to government. In either view, justice relates to the distribution of happiness, or the means of procuring it, and presupposes a principle or rule to which this distribution should conform, and, according to which, something is *due* to the parties. Commutative Justice regulates the giving of one means of enjoyment in exchange for another, so as not to disturb the proportion of happiness allotted to each; but Distributive Justice rises higher, and respects the very allotment or distribution of happiness, giving to one, and withholding from another, according

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[1] 2 Thess. ii. 11. [2] 1 Kings, xxii.

[3] Job xxxiv. 12; Ps. ix. 4; xcii. 15; Isaiah xxviii. 17; Rom. ii. 6.

to rule. It is in the latter sense only that justice is attributed to God. It implies the existence of moral government; and it is the attribute which secures a faithful and perfect administration of this government.

Some have admitted another distinction, to which the name Public Justice has been given. This determines the character of God's moral government, and the rules according to which it proceeds. It may be regarded as a question of definition, whether the existence and character of God's moral government shall be ascribed to his justice or his goodness. As this government tends to the greatest good of the universe, there appears to be no reason to deny that it originates in the goodness of God; and if it be ascribed to his Public Justice, that justice may be considered a modification of his goodness.

In the moral government of God, men are regarded as moral and as sentient beings, and the amount of their enjoyments is regulated with reference to their moral character. The precise adaptation of this is the province of justice. In the blindness of human depravity, men claim enjoyments as a natural right, irrespective of their moral character and conduct. They reject the moral government of God, and seek happiness in their own way. This is their rebellion, and in this the justice of God opposes them. This is the attribute which fills them with terror, and arrays omnipotence against them. The moral government of God must be overthrown, and the monarch of the universe driven from his high seat of authority, or there is no hope of escape for the sinner. He would gladly rush into the vast storehouse of enjoyments which infinite goodness has provided, and claim them as his own, and riot on them at pleasure; but the sword of justice guards the entrance. In opposition to his desires, the government of God is firmly established, and justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Even in the present world, the manifestations of this government are everywhere visible; and it is apparent that there is a God, a God of justice, who judgeth in the earth; but the grand exhibition is reserved for the judgment of the great day. Conscience now, in God's stead, often pronounces sentence, though its voice is unheeded; but the sentence from the lips of the Supreme Judge cannot be disregarded, and will fix the sinner's final doom.

Although there are hearts so hard as to be unaffected by a sense

of God's justice, a right view of this awful and glorious attribute inspires that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. An abiding assurance that a just God sits on the throne of the universe, is indispensable to the proper exercise of piety.

Section X.—HOLINESS.

God is immaculately holy.[1]

Goodness, truth and justice, are moral attributes of God. Holiness is not an attribute distinct from these; but a name which includes them all, in view of their opposition to contrary qualities. It implies the perfection of the assemblage;—the absence of every thing in it contrary to either of the properties included.

Men are unholy. Even the purest of men have their spots. It is useful to contrast the character of God, in this respect, with that of men. It increases our admiration and love, adds fervor to our devotion, incites to worship him in the beauty of holiness, and to imitate him in our character and lives. "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Section XI.—WISDOM.

God is infinitely wise.[2]

Knowledge and wisdom, though often confounded by careless thinkers, are different. Wisdom always has respect to action. Our senses are affected by external objects, and perceptions of them arise in the mind, which constitute a large part of our knowledge. We learn their properties and relations, and this knowledge, laid up in the memory, becomes a valuable store, from which we may take what may be necessary for use. But it is in using this store that wisdom is exhibited. When impressions from without have stirred the mental machinery within, that machinery, in turn, operates on things without. It is in the out-goings of the mind that wisdom has place, and is concerned in forming our plans and purposes of action. Our knowledge and moral principles have much influence in directing our conduct, and that man is considered wise, whose knowledge and moral principles direct his conduct well.

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[1] Ex. xv. 11; Lev. xi. 44; 1 Sam. ii. 2; Job. iv. 18; Ps. v. 4, 5; xxii. 3; Isa. vi. 3; Hab. i. 13; Matt. v. 48; 1 John i. 5; Rev. iv. 8.

[2] Job iv. 18; xxxvi. 5; Ps. civ. 24; Prov. xxi. 30; Rom. xi. 33; 1 Cor. i. 25. 1 Tim. i. 17.

Wisdom is therefore regarded as consisting in the selection of the best end of action, and the adoption of the best means for the accomplishment of this end.

God is infinitely wise, because he selects the best possible end of action. What the end is which Jehovah has in view in all his works, we cannot claim to comprehend. The Scriptures speak of the glory of God as the end of creation and redemption, and we seem authorized to speak of this as the end of all his works; but what is the full import of the phrase, "the glory of God?" We suppose it to signify such a manifestation of his perfections, and especially of his moral perfections, as is supremely pleasing to himself, and therefore to all intelligent beings who are like-minded with him. But we are lost in the contemplation.

God is infinitely wise, because he adopts the best possible means for the accomplishment of the end which he has in view. In creation his wisdom made them all;[1] and in redemption he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom.[2] He worketh all things after the counsel of his will;[3] and he is wise in counsel.

The wisdom of God is an unfathomable deep. His way is in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God![4] A child cannot comprehend the plans of a sage statesman; much less can the wisest of men comprehend the plans of the only wise God. We should ever bear this in mind when we undertake to inquire into the reasons of the divine procedure.

The question, why God permitted the entrance of sin into the world, has baffled the wisdom of the wise. As a being of perfect holiness, he hates sin with a perfect hatred. Having infinite power to exclude it from his dominions, why did he permit its entrance? As the benevolent Father of his great family, why did he permit so ruinous an evil to invade it? Was there some oversight in his plan, some failure in the wisdom of his arrangements, that rendered this direful disaster possible? As our faith is often perplexed with these questions, such observations as the following may be of use to assist its weakness.

1. Sin is in the world; and God is infinitely good and wise. The first of these propositions expresses a fact of which we have

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[1] Ps. civ. 24. [2] Eph. i. 8. [3] Eph. i. 11. [4] Rom. xi. 33.

daily proof, before our eyes and in our hearts; the second is an indubitable truth of natural and revealed religion. Though we may be unable to reconcile these propositions, they are both worthy to be received with unwavering faith. No man, in his right mind, can doubt either of them.

2. The existence of sin is not to be ascribed to weakness in God. He could easily have barred it out of his dominions. He might have declined to make moral agents, and have filled the world with creatures possessing no moral faculties, and therefore incapable of sinning. Or, for aught that appears to the contrary, it was in his power to create moral agents, and so confirm them in holiness from the first, as to render their fall impossible. Or, on the very first appearance of sin in any one of his creatures, he might have at once annihilated the transgressor, and have prevented the evil from spreading, to the ruin of his subjects, or even remaining in his dominions. If we can, for a moment, entertain doubt on this point, his perfect control of the evil, now that it has obtained entrance into his dominion, is sufficient to confirm our faith. It has indeed entered, and the prince of the power of the air is combined with his numerous legions, to give it prevalence and triumph. But, to destroy the works of the devil, the son of God appeared in human nature. He chose the weakness of that nature for the display of his power, in crushing the head of the old serpent. Hence Christ is the power of God. In his deepest humiliation, in the hour while hanging on the cross, he triumphed over his foe, and gave proof of his triumphant power, by plucking the thief, who expired near him, from the very jaws of destruction. The cross exhibits the brightest display of omnipotence.

3. The existence of sin is not inconsistent with the justice of God. It is the province of justice to punish the sinner, but not to annihilate his sin. Justice, in the wide sense in which it is called Public Justice, and coincides with Goodness, will be considered, in its relation to this subject, in the next observation; but, in its ordinary sense, it supposes the existence of moral government, and moral agents, and, therefore, the possibility of transgression. Laws are made with reference to the lawless and disobedient; and the civil ruler would be armed with the sword in vain, if there could be no evil-doers to whom he might be a terror. Justice does not prevent the entrance of sin, but finds in it an occasion for its highest

exercise. This attribute is displayed awfully and gloriously in the punishment of offenders. On seeing the destruction of Antichrist, and the smoke of his torment ascending up for ever and ever, the inhabitants of heaven are represented as saying: "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."[1] It is in the exercise of his punitive justice that they understand his government, and wherefore he is seated on the throne. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

4. The existence of sin is not inconsistent with the goodness of God. Even those who explain goodness to be the love of happiness for its own sake, and understand utility, or the production of happiness, to be the foundation of virtue, do not conclude that God's goodness must necessarily exclude moral evil from the world. On the contrary, they suppose that he will overrule the evil so as ultimately to produce a larger amount of happiness in the universe, than would have existed had moral evil never entered. If this be taken as a mere hypothesis, until it be disproved, it will be sufficient to answer objections; and the hypothesis cannot be disproved by a mind incapable of comprehending the infinite subject. If God's goodness aims at the well-being of the universe, rather than at its happiness, another hypothesis, impossible to be disproved, may be made, that God overrules the existence of sin so as to produce most important moral benefits. What these may be, we cannot be expected to understand; but of one benefit, at least, we can form a conjecture. As God's moral perfections are the glory of his character, so his moral government is the glory of his universal scheme; and it may, therefore, have been pleasing to his infinite mind to permit the entrance of sin, because it gave occasion for the display of his justice and moral government. It may accord best with his infinite wisdom, to confirm his obedient subjects in holiness, not by physical necessity, but by moral influence; and the display of his justice and moral government must be a most important means for the accomplishment of this end. How could the intelligences that are to expand for ever in the presence of his throne, have those moral impressions which are necessary to the perfection of their holiness, if they should for ever remain ignorant of his justice, and hatred of sin?

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[1] Rev. xix. 6.

In contemplating this subject, it is important to keep in view, that God's goodness is to be estimated by its aggregate effect. As including the love of happiness, it provides enjoyments for his creatures: in this life, innumerable and ever present, though not infinite, or unmixed; and in the life to come, what eye has not seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived. This mass of enjoyment he has not thrown before his creatures, that each may secure to himself what he can; but infinite justice guards the distribution of it. The rule of distribution is that which Public Justice, or God's goodness, considered as the love of well-being, has prescribed in the establishment of his moral government. Infinite goodness secures the greatest possible good from his universal administration, while perfect justice regulates all the details of that administration, in beautiful harmony with the grand design.

5. Although to do evil that good may come is reprobated in God's word, yet to permit evil, which he overrules for good, accords with his method of procedure. It is said: "The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain."[1] In this it is clearly implied that a portion of the wrath is unrestrained, or permitted, and is overruled for good. Paul asks, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?"[2] Endurance and long-suffering is the permission of the continuance of the evil; and the display of God's justice and power thereby, is manifestly supposed in the Apostle's question. The crucifixion of Christ, a deed perpetrated by wicked hands, was permitted by God. He was even delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. This event has been overruled to good inconceivably great. Why may we not suppose that it accorded with infinite wisdom to permit the entrance of sin, with a view to the glorious scheme of redemption by the blood of Christ? Christ crucified is the wisdom of God. In his cross, the power, goodness, justice, and wisdom of God, are harmoniously and gloriously displayed. While we glory in the cross of Christ, we do not forget that the enemies of the cross are to perish. Mournful as the fact is, our hearts will fully approve the sentence which will be executed upon them, when we shall hear it pronounced by the lips of the righteous judge.

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[1] Ps. lxxvi. 10. [2] Rom. ix. 22.

Such was the benevolence of Paul's heart, that he was willing to lay down his life for the salvation of souls; yet so overpowering was his sense of Christ's claim to the love of every human heart, that he did not hesitate to exclaim: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha."[1] If it accorded with his love of souls to pronounce this imprecation, it will accord with the benevolence of God to punish the enemies of Christ with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. If our minds now fail fully to approve the awful sentence, it is because we inadequately conceive the glory and loveliness of Christ.

It should fill us with joy, that infinite wisdom guides the affairs of the world. Many of its events are shrouded in darkness and mystery, and inextricable confusion sometimes seems to reign. Often wickedness prevails, and God seems to have forgotten the creatures that he has made. Our own path through life is dark and devious, and beset with difficulties and dangers. How full of consolation is the doctrine, that infinite wisdom directs every event, brings order out of confusion, and light out of darkness, and, to those who love God, causes all things, whatever be their present aspect and apparent tendency, to work together for good.

CONCLUSION.

The doctrine concerning God harmonizes with the affections of the pious heart, and tends to cherish them. The moral nature of those who do not love God, demonstrates his existence and their obligation to love him, and consequently, their nature is at war with itself. There is a conflict within, between conscience and the depraved affections. The moral principle is in the unrenewed heart, overrun with unholy passions; and it cannot be duly developed, until the affections are sanctified. When, by this change, harmony has been produced in the inner man, all that is within will harmonize with the doctrine concerning God. The mind, in its proper and healthy action, joyfully receives the doctrine, and finds in God the object of its highest love. The pious man rejoices that God exists, and that his attributes are what nature and revelation pro-

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

claim them to be. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."[1]

The doctrine concerning God not only harmonizes with inward piety, but tends to cherish it. If love to God exists when he is but partially known, it will increase as our knowledge of him increases. As the pious man studies the character of God, the beauty and glory of that character open to his view, and his heart is drawn out towards it with more intense affection. With such soul-ravishing views the Psalmist had been favored, when he exclaimed, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."[2]

The love of God, which is increased by a true knowledge of him, is not a mere feeling of gratitude for blessings received. Many persons talk of God's goodness, and profess to love him, who have no pleasure in contemplating his holiness and justice, and to whom these are unwelcome attributes. When such persons stand before him in the last judgment, there is reason to fear that they will find him to be a different God from that which they loved and praised on earth. Love to the true God is love to the God of holiness and justice, the God in whom every moral perfection is united; and if our love is of this kind, we shall delight to survey the glories of the divine character, and, apart from all views of the benefits received from him, shall be enamored of his essential loveliness.

The love to God which increases by a true knowledge of him, is pervaded with a deep-felt reverence for his character. The familiar levity with which he is sometimes approached and addressed, by no means comports with the awful exhibitions of himself which he has made in his works and in his word. They who, while they profess to love him, have no solemn sense of his infinite grandeur and holiness, have yet to learn the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. The true knowledge of God will rectify this evil in the heart.

The true love of God is accompanied with humility. When we are absorbed in the contemplation of the human mind, we may well be filled with admiration of its powers and capacities. But lately,

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[1] Ps. lxxiii. 25. [2] Ps. lxiii. 1, 2

it rose into being, from the darkness of nonentity, a spark so feebly glimmering, that an omniscient eye only could perceive its light. In the short period which has intervened, it has gradually increased in splendor, and has probably astonished the world by its brilliance. What was once the feeblest ray of intellect, has become a Newton, a Locke, a Howard, or a Napoleon. And when we conceive of this immortal mind, as continuing to expand its powers throughout a boundless future, we are ready to form a high estimate of human greatness. But when we remember that man, whatever he is, and whatever he is capable of, is a creature formed by the hand of God, and endowed by him with all these noble faculties; when we consider that, with all his advancement through eternal ages, he will forever be as nothing, compared with the infinitude of God; and when we look back into past eternity, and contemplate God as existing with all this boundlessness of perfection, ages of ages before our feeble existence commenced; we may well turn away from all admiration of human greatness, and exclaim, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

But the strongest incentive to humility is found in contrasting our depravity with God's holiness. Noble as the human intellect is, it is ruined by its apostasy from God. Every depraved son of Adam, who has studied the attributes of God, and has attained to some knowledge of his immaculate holiness, may well exclaim, in deep humility, "Wo is me! a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."[1]

The true knowledge of God gives confidence in him. In view of his truth, we learn to put unwavering trust in the manifestations of himself which he has made, and the promises which he has given, for the foundation of our hope. There are times when the good man loses his sensible enjoyment of the divine favor, and when the sword of justice appears pointed at his breast; but even then, with the true knowledge and love of God in his heart, he can say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

The doctrine concerning God which the Bible teaches, confirms its claim to be regarded as the word of God.

This doctrine, as we have seen, is precisely adapted to man's moral nature, and calls forth the moral and religious principles

[1] Isaiah vi. 5.

with which his Creator has endowed him, into their best and noblest exercise. If viewed apart from his relation to God, man, the creature so wonderfully endowed, is an enigma in the universe; but the doctrine concerning God solves the mystery. The tendency of this doctrine to exert a sanctifying influence, at the very origin of all human feeling and action, demonstrates that it comes from God. He who experiences its sanctifying power on his heart, has a proof of its truth that nothing else can give. For this doctrine, we are chiefly indebted to the Bible. Here God, who has dimly exhibited himself in his works, comes forth in a direct communication, and like the sun in the heavens, makes himself visible by his own light. If the religious principle within us acted as it ought, the doctrine of the Bible would be as precisely adapted to us as the light of the sun is to the eye; and we should have as thorough conviction that the God of the Bible exists, as we have that the sun exists, when we see him shining forth with all his splendor in the mid-heavens.

The proof that the Bible is the word of God, will accumulate as we make progress in our investigation of religious truth. We have advanced one step, by our inquiries into the existence and attributes of God; and the glory of the Bible-doctrine concerning God, has shone on our path with dazzling brightness. Let us continue to prosecute our studies, guided by this holy book; and if we open our hearts to the sanctifying power of its truth, we shall have increasing proof, in its influence on our souls, that it comes from the God of holiness.

BOOK THIRD.

DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE WILL AND WORKS OF GOD.

INTRODUCTION.

DUTY OF DELIGHTING IN THE WILL AND WORKS OF GOD.[1]

If any one supposes that religion consists merely of self-denial and painful austerities, and that it is filled with gloom and melancholy, to the exclusion of all happiness, he greatly mistakes its true character. False religions, and false views of the true religion, may be liable to this charge; but the religion which has God for its author, and which leads the soul to God, is full of peace and joy. It renders us cheerful amidst the trials of life, contented with all the allotments of Divine Providence, happy in the exercises of piety and devotion, and joyful in the hope of an endless felicity. Heaven is near in prospect; and, while on the way to that world of perfect and eternal bliss, we are permitted, in some measure, to anticipate its joys, being, even here, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.[2] We are enabled, not only to pursue our pilgrimage to the good land with content and cheerfulness, but even to "delight ourselves in the Lord."[3] Our happiness is not merely the absence of grief and pain, but it is positive delight.

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[1] *Ps.* xxxvii. 4. Delight thyself in the Lord.
Ps. xl. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God.
Ps. cxix. 47. I will delight myself in thy commandments.
Rom. vii. 22. I delight in the law of God.
Ps.. cvii. 22. Declare his works with rejoicing.

[2] Eph. i. 3.

[3] Ps. xxxvii. 4.

The delight which attends other religious exercises should be felt in the investigation of religious truth, and should stimulate to diligence and perseverance. Divine truth is not only sanctifying, but it is also beatifying. To the ancient saints it was sweeter than honey and the honey-comb;[1] and the early Christians, in "believing" the truth as it is in Jesus, "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[2] If we loved the truth as we ought, we should experience equal delight in receiving it; and the careful investigation of it would be a source of pure and abiding pleasure. It would not suffice to employ our intellectual powers in the discussion of perplexing questions appertaining to religion, but we should find a rich feast in the truth that may be known and read by all. The man who indulges his skeptical doubts, and suffers himself to be detained by questions to no profit, is like one who, when a bountiful feast is spread before him, instead of enjoying the offered food, employs himself in examining a supposed flaw in the dish in which it is served. The glorious truths which are plainly revealed concerning God, and the things of God, are sufficient to enable every one to delight himself in the Lord.

We have before seen that love to God lies at the foundation of true religion. Love, considered as simple benevolence, has for its object the production of happiness, and not the receiving of it. But, by the wise arrangements of infinite goodness, the producing of happiness blesses him that gives as well as him that receives. It is even "more blessed to give than to receive."[3] But when God is the object of our love, as we cannot increase his happiness, we delight in it as already perfect; and all the outflowing of our love to him, finding the measure of his bliss already full, returns back on ourselves, filling us also with the fulness of God. God is love; and to love God with all the heart is to have the heart filled, to the full measure of its capacity, with the blessedness of the divine nature. This is the fulness of delight.

In the existence and attributes of God a sufficient foundation is laid for the claim of supreme love to him; but, for the active exercise of the holy affection, God must be viewed not merely as existing, but as acting. To produce delight in him, his perfections must be manifested. So we enjoy the objects of our earthly love

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[1] Ps. xix. 10. [2] 1 Pet. i. 8. [3] Acts xx. 35.

by their presence with us, and the display of those qualities which attract our hearts. Heaven is full of bliss, because its inhabitants not only love God, but see the full manifestations of his glory. To enjoy God on earth, we must contemplate him in such manifestations of himself as he has been pleased to make to us who dwell on his footstool. These we may discover in the declarations of his will, and in his works, which are the execution of his will. In a contemplation of these, the pious heart finds a source of pure, elevating delight.

When the Son of God consented to appear in human nature for the salvation of man, he said: "I delight to do thy will, O my God."[1] If the same mind were in us that was in Christ Jesus, we, too, would delight in the will of God. We should be able to say with David, "I will delight myself in thy commandments;" and with Paul, "I delight in the law of God." We should yield obedience to every precept, not reluctantly, but cheerfully; not cheerfully only, but with joy and delight. It would be to us meat and drink to do the will of God, as it was to our blessed Lord. Our religious enjoyment would consist not merely in receiving good from God, but in rendering active service to him; like the happy spirits before the throne, who serve God day and night, and delight in his service. Not only should we delight to render personal service to our Sovereign, but we should desire his will to be done by all others, and should rejoice in his universal dominion. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."

As the ancient saints delighted in the will and government of God, so they delighted in his works. They saw in them the manifestations of his wisdom, power, and goodness; and they delighted to meditate on them. His glory, displayed in the heavens, and his handy work, visible in earth, they contemplated with holy pleasure. They rejoiced to remember, "It is he that made us;" and, in approaching him with religious worship, they were accustomed to address him as the Creator of all things: "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is."[2]

The goodness displayed in God's works awakens gratitude in the pious man. While he enjoys the gift, he recognises the hand which bestows it; and each blessing is rendered more dear, because

[1] Ps. xl. 8.

[2] Acts iv. 24.

conferred by him whom he supremely loves. He sees in creation a vast store-house of enjoyment, and blesses the author of it. He receives from the providence of God the innumerable benefits which are every day bestowed, and he blesses the kind bestower. God is in every mercy, and his heart, in enjoying it, goes out ever to God, with incessant praise and thanksgiving.

The trial of our delight in God is experienced when affliction comes. The pious man feels that this, too, is from the hand of God. So thought all the saints, of whose religious exercises the Bible gives us an account. They bowed under affliction in the spirit of resignation to God, as the author of the affliction. So Job,[1] "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." So David,[2] "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it." So Eli,[3] "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." So Paul's companions,[4] "We ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done." The ancient saints believed in an overruling Providence, and they received all afflictions as ordered by him, in every particular; and on this faith the resignation was founded by which their eminent piety was distinguished. To the flesh, the affliction was not joyous, but grievous, and, therefore, they could not delight in it, when considered in itself; but, when enduring it with keenest anguish, they could still say, with Job, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." They firmly believed that the dispensation was wisely and kindly ordered, and that God would bring good out of the evil; and, however oppressed with suffering, and filled with present sorrow, they still trusted in God; and delight in him alleviated their misery, and mingled with their sorrows.

Let love to God burn in our hearts while we contemplate his existence and attributes. Let delight in him rise to the highest rapture of which earthly minds are susceptible, while we study his will and works. The grand work of redemption, into which the angels especially desire to look, and which is the chief theme of the song of the glorified, is fitted to produce higher ecstasy; but even the themes of creation and providence may fill us with delight, if we approach them as we ought. When the foundations of the earth were laid, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God

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[1] Job i. 21. [2] Ps. xxxix. 9. [3] 1 Sam. iii. 18. [4] Acts xxi. 14.

shouted for joy; and angels now delight to be the ministers of God's providence. Let us, with like devotion to Almighty God, delight in his will and works.

CHAPTER I.

WILL OF GOD.

THE term *will*, which always imports desire, is variously applied, according to the object of that desire.

1. It denotes intention or purpose to act. It is said of Apollos "His will was not at all to come at this time,"[1] *i. e.*, he had not formed the intention or purpose to come. In this sense, the will of God is spoken of: "According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."[2] Purpose or intention may exist before the time of action arrives. When it has arrived, the mind puts forth an act termed volition, to produce the desired effect. In human beings, purposes may be fickle, and may undergo change before the time for action comes; but God's purpose or intention is never changed; and when the time for producing the purposed effect arrives, we are not to conceive that a new volition arises in the mind of God; but the effect follows, according to the will of God, without any new effort on his part.

2. It denotes a desire to act, restrained by stronger opposing desires, or other counteracting influences. Pilate was "willing" to release Jesus;[3] but other considerations, present to his mind, overruled this desire, and determined his action. We are compelled to conceive of the divine mind, from the knowledge which we possess of our own; and the Scriptures adapt their language to our conceptions. In this way, a desire to act is sometimes attributed to God, when opposing considerations prevent his action. "I would scatter them, were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy."[4] "How often would I have gathered, &c., and ye would not."[5]

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[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 12. [2] Eph. i. 11. [3] Luke xxiii. 20. [4] Deut. xxxii. 27. [5] Matt. xxiii. 37.

3. It is used with reference to an external object that is desired, or an action which it is desired that another should perform. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not."[1] "Be it unto thee as thou wilt."[2] "Ask what ye will."[3] "What will ye, that I should do."[4] In this sense, as expressing simply what is in itself desirable to God, will is attributed to him. "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."[5] "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, &c."[6] "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."[7]

4. Closely allied to the last signification, and perhaps included in it, is that use of the term *will*, in which it denotes *command*, *requirement*. When the person, whose desire or pleasure it is that an action should be performed by another, has authority over that other, the desire expressed assumes the character of precept. The expressed will of a suppliant, is petition; the expressed will of a ruler, is command. What we know that it is the pleasure of God we should do, it is our duty to do, and his pleasure made known to us becomes a law.

Will of Command.

It is specially important to distinguish between the first and last of the significations which have been enumerated. In the first, the will of God refers exclusively to his own action, and imports his fixed determination as to what he will do. It is called his will of purpose, and always takes effect. In the last sense, it refers to the actions of his creatures, and expresses what it would be pleasing to him that they should do. This is called his will of precept, and it always fails to take effect when the actions of his creatures do not please him, i. e., when they are in violation of his commands. The will of purpose is intended, when it is said, "According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,"[8] and, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."[9] The will of precept is intended, when it is said, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.[10] Let it be noted that, in the former case, God only is the agent, and the effect is certain; in the latter, his

[1] Heb. x. 5. [2] Matt. xv. 28. [3] John xv. 7. [4] Mark xv. 12.
[5] 2 Peter iii. 9. [6] Ezek. xxxiii. 11. [7] 1 Thess. iv. 3. [8] Eph. i. 11.
[9] Dan. iv. 35. [10] Matt. vi. 10.

creatures are the agents, and the effect is not an object of certain expectation, but of petition.

GOD'S WILL OF COMMAND, HOWEVER MADE KNOWN TO US, IS OUR RULE OF DUTY.[1]

The Scriptures make the will of God the rule of duty, both to those who have the means of clear knowledge, and those who have not. The disobedience of the former will be punished with many stripes, that of the latter with few. No man will be held accountable, except for the means of knowledge that are within his reach; but these, even in the case of the benighted heathen, are sufficient to render them inexcusable. We have no right to dictate to God in what manner he shall make his will known to us; but we are bound to avail ourselves of all possible means for obtaining the knowledge of it; and, when known, we are bound to obey it perfectly, and from the heart.

Various terms are used to denote the will of God, as made known in the Holy Scriptures, statutes, judgments, laws, precepts, ordinances, &c. The two great precepts, which lie at the foundation of all the laws, are, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The first of these is expanded into the four commandments, which constitute the first table of the decalogue; the second into the six commandments, which constitute the second table. The decalogue was given for a law to the children of Israel, as is apparent from its introduction. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."[2] It was, however, distinguished from the other laws given to that nation, by being pronounced audibly from Sinai with the voice of God, and by being engraved with the finger of God on the tables of stone. When we examine its precepts, we discover that they respect the relations of men, as men, to God and to one another; and we find, in the New Testament, that their obligation is regarded as extending to Gentiles under the gospel dispensation.[3] We infer, therefore, that the decalogue, though given to the Israelites, respected them as men, and not as a peculiar people, and is equally obligatory on all men.

The ceremonial law respected the children of Israel as a wor-

[1] Ps. xl. 8; cxliii. 10; Matt. vi. 10; Rom. ii. 18; Ex. xx; Rom. ii. 12–15; Eccl. xii. 13. [2] Ex. xx. 2. [3] Rom. xiii. 8, 9; Eph. vi. 2.

shipping congregation, called "the Congregation of the Lord." It commenced with the institution of the passover, and ended when Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, and when the hand-writing of ordinances was nailed to the cross. Then its obligation ceased. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ceremonies of the Christian dispensation, obligatory on the disciples of Christ, to the end of the world.

The judicial law was given to the Israelites as a nation, and is not obligatory on any other people. The principles of justice on which it was based, are universal, and should be incorporated into every civil code.

Will of Purpose.

GOD WILLS WHATEVER HE DOES.[1]

God is a voluntary agent. There are many powers in nature which operate without volition. Fire consumes the fuel, steam moves the engine, and poison takes away life; but these have no will. Even beings that possess will, sometimes act involuntarily, and sometimes against their will, or by compulsion from a superior power. God acts voluntarily in every thing that he does; — not by physical necessity; not by compulsion from any superior power; not by mistake, or oversight, or power unintentionally exerted. Men may plead in apology for their acts, that they were done in thoughtlessness, or through inadvertence; but God has never any such apology to make. Known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world,[2] and therefore they have been duly considered.

GOD DOES WHATEVER HE WILLS TO DO.[3]

God is not omnipotent, if he absolutely wills or desires to do anything, and fails to accomplish it.

WHATEVER GOD DOES IS ACCORDING TO A PURPOSE THAT IS ETERNAL, UNCHANGEABLE, PERFECTLY FREE, AND INFINITELY WISE.[4]

That God has a purpose, none can deny, who attribute wisdom to him. To act without purpose is the part of a child, or an idiot. A wise man does not act without purpose, much less can the only wise God. Besides, the Scriptures speak so expressly of his pur-

[1] Job xxiii. 13; Dan. iv. 35; Eph. i. 11. [2] Acts xv. 18.

[3] Job xxiii. 13; Dan. iv. 35; Eph. i. 11; Isa. xlvi. 10; Dan. xi. 36.

[4] Job xxiii. 13; Isa. xl. 14; xlvi. 10; Jer. li. 29; Rom. viii. 28; Eph i. 11; iii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9.

pose, that no one, who admits the authority of revelation, can reject the doctrine, however much he may misinterpret or abuse it. The term implies that God has an end in view in whatever he does, and that he has a plan according to which he acts.

The purpose of God is eternal and unchangeable. A wise man, in executing a purpose, may have many separate volitions, which are momentary actings of his mind; but his purpose is more durable, continuing from its first formation in the mind to its complete execution. The term will, as applied to the act of the divine mind, does not, in itself, imply duration; but the purpose of God, from the very import of the phrase, must have duration. God must have had a purpose when he created the world; and the Scriptures speak of his purpose before the world began. But the duration of it is still more explicitly declared in the phrase, "the eternal purpose."[1] The term is never used in the plural number by the inspired writers; as if God had many plans, or a succession of plans. It is one entire, glorious scheme; and the date of it is from everlasting. Its eternity implies its unchangeableness; and its unchangeableness implies its eternity; and its oneness accords with both these properties.

The purpose of God is perfectly free. It is not forced upon him from without; for nothing existed to restrict the infinite mind of him who was before all. It is the purpose which he hath "purposed in himself."[2] It is his will; and must, therefore, be voluntary. The term purpose and will apply to the same thing in different aspects of it, or according to different modes of conceiving it. If *purpose* more naturally suggests the idea of duration, *will* suggests its freeness. It is not the fate believed in by the ancient heathens, by which they considered the gods to be bound, as truly as men.

The purpose of God is infinitely wise. We have argued, that God must have a purpose because he is wise; and, therefore, his wisdom must be concerned in his purpose. It is not an arbitrary or capricious scheme; but one devised by infinite wisdom, having the best possible end to accomplish, and adopting the best possible means for its accomplishment.

Writers on theology have employed the term Decrees, to denote

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[1] Eph. iii. 11. [2] Eph. i. 9.

the purpose of God. It is an objection to this term, that there is no inspired authority for its use in this sense. When the Scriptures use the term decree, they signify by it a command promulged, to be observed by those under authority. It is the will of precept, rather than the will of purpose. And further, its use in the plural number does not accord so well with the oneness of the divine plan.

Scarcely any doctrine of religion has given so much occasion for cavil and stumbling as that of God's decrees. As if men would be wiser than God, they refuse to let him form a plan, or they find fault with it when formed; and very few have so much humility and simplicity of faith, as to escape wholly from the embarrassment which the objections to this doctrine have produced. They, therefore, need a careful examination.

Objection 1. — The purpose of God is inconsistent with the free-agency of man.

It is a full answer to this objection, that a mere purpose cannot interfere with the freedom of any one. When a tyrant designs to imprison one of his subjects, until the design is carried into execution, the liberty of the subject is not invaded. He roams as free as ever, untouched by the premeditated evil. The infringement of his liberty commences when the purpose begins to be executed, and not before. So, in the divine government, the purpose of the Supreme Ruler interferes not at all with the liberty of his subjects, so long as it remains a mere purpose. The objection which we are considering, is wholly inapplicable to the doctrine of God's purpose. Its proper place, if it has any, is against the doctrine of God's providence; and, under that head, it will be proper to meet it. It was God's purpose to create man a free-agent; and he did so create him. Thus far, neither the purpose, nor the execution of it, can be charged with infringing man's moral freedom; but they unite to establish it. It was God's purpose to govern man as a free-agent; and has he not done so? If every man feels that the providence of God, while it presides in the affairs of men, leaves him perfectly free to act from choice in every thing that he does, what ground is there for the complaint, that the purpose of God interferes with man's free-agency? If the evil complained of is not in the execution of the purpose, it is certainly not in the purpose itself.

This objection often comes before us practically. When we are called upon for action to which we are averse, the argument pre-

sents itself; if God has fore-ordained whatever comes to pass, the event is certain; and what is to be, will be, without our effort. It is worthy of remark, that this argument never induces us to deviate from a course to which we are inclined. If some pleasure invites, we never excuse ourselves from the indulgence, on the plea, that, if we are to enjoy it, we shall enjoy it. The fact is sufficient to teach us the insincerity of the plea, when admitted in other cases It prevails with us only through the deceitfulness of sin; and, however specious the argument may appear, when it coincides with our inclinations, we never trust it in any other case. No man in his senses remains at ease in a burning dwelling, on the plea, that, if he is to escape from the flames, he will escape. The providence of God establishes the relation between cause and effect, and gives full scope for the influence of the human will. To argue that effects will be produced without their appropriate causes, is to deny the known arrangement of Providence. He who expects from the purpose of God, that which the providence of God denies him, expects the purpose to be inconsistent with its own development. He charges the plan of the Most Wise, with inconsistency and folly, that he may find a subterfuge for criminal indulgence.

Objection 2. — If God purposed the fall of angels or men, he is the author of their sin.

Before we proceed to answer this objection, it is necessary to examine the terms in which it is expressed. In what sense did God purpose the fall of angels or men, or any sinful action? There is a sense, familiar to the pious, in which any event that takes place, under the overruling providence of God, is attributed to him, whatever subordinate agents may have been concerned in effecting it. The wind, the lightning, the Chaldeans, the Sabeans, were all concerned in the afflictions that fell on the patriarch Job; but he recognised the overruling hand of God in every event, and piously exclaimed: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[1] So Joseph, when sold by his brethren in Egypt, saw the hand of God in the event, and explained the design of his providence: "For God did send me before you to preserve life."[2] In precisely the same sense in which God's

[1] Job. i. 21.

[2] Gen. xlv. 5.

providence is concerned with such events, his purpose is concerned with them; and in no other.

With this explanation, let us proceed to consider the objection. Did Joseph design to charge on God the authorship of his brethrens' sin? Nothing was further from his mind. They had been truly guilty of their brother's blood; and their own consciences charged them with it. They felt that they were responsible for the sin, and Joseph knew the same; and nothing that he said was designed to transfer the responsibility from them to God. Yet he saw and delighted to contemplate the purpose of God in the event. That purpose was, "to save much people alive." This purpose was executed; and God was the author, both of the purpose and the beneficial result. So, in every case, the good which he educes out of moral evil, and not the moral evil itself, is the proper object of his purpose. It should ever be remembered, that his purpose is his intention to act; and that, strictly speaking, it relates to his own action exclusively. It does, indeed, extend to everything that is done under the sun, just as the omnipresence of God extends to everything; but it extends to everything, no otherwise than as he is concerned with everything; and what God does, and nothing else, is the proper object of his purpose. "HE WORKETH all things after the counsel of his own will."[1] "I WILL DO all my pleasure."[2] "HE DOETH according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."[3] It cannot be too carefully noticed, that the purpose of God relates strictly and properly to his own actions. Now, God is not the actor of sin, and therefore his purpose can never make him the author of it.

The objection, though it may appear to have greater force when applied to the first sin of man, is not, in reality, more applicable to this, than to every sin which has been since committed. God made Adam, and all his descendants, moral and accountable agents, preserved them in being, and sustained their moral powers; he permitted their sin; and he overrules the evil, from the beginning throughout, to effect a most glorious result. In all this, what God has done, and is doing, he purposed to do. In all, his action is most righteous, wise, and holy; and, therefore, his purpose is so.

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[1] Eph. i. 11. [2] Isaiah xlvi. 10. [3] Dan. iv. 35.

He is the author, not of the moral evil which he permits, but of the good of which he makes it the occasion.

The distinction between the permission and the authorship of sin some have denied; but, in so doing, they have not the countenance of God's word. The whole tenor of the inspired volume leads us to regard God as the author of holiness, but not of sin. We are taught that in him is no sin;[1] that "he is light, and in him is no darkness;"[2] that "every good and perfect gift," not sin, "cometh down from the Father of lights;"[3] that God is not tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man.[4] In such language we are taught to consider God as the author and source of holiness; and it is as contrary to the doctrine of the holy word to attribute sin to him, as darkness to the sun. Yet this same word teaches his permission of evil. "He *suffered* all nations to walk in their own way."[5] His long-suffering, of which the Scriptures speak so much, implies the permission of sin. But of that which is highly displeasing to him, even when he bears with it, he cannot be the author.

Objection 3. — If God purposed the final condemnation of the wicked, he made them on purpose to damn them.

This objection, which impiety loves to present in the most repulsive form, it becomes us to approach with profound reverence for him whose character and motives it impugns. Let us imagine ourselves present at the proceedings of the last day. The righteous Judge sits on his great white throne, and all nations are gathered before him. The books are opened, and every man is impartially judged, according to the deeds done in the body. The award is made up, and the sentence pronounced. The wicked are commanded to "depart into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels;" and the righteous are welcomed into "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." The scene is past, and the mysterious economy of God's forbearance and grace is now finally closed. Is there anything in the transactions of that day which is unworthy of God? Is there anything which the holy inhabitants of heaven, throughout their immortal existence, can ever remember with disapprobation? Not so. The Judge, while

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[1] 1 John i. 5. [2] Ibid. [3] James i. 17.
[4] James i. 13. [5] Acts xiv. 16.

he punishes the wicked with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, is glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;[1] and he will ever appear glorious in the decisions of that day. If God's action on that day will be so glorious to him, will it be any dishonor to him that he has purposed so to act?

The idea, were any one disposed seriously to entertain it, that God will be taken by surprise at the last judgment, and compelled to pass an unpremeditated sentence, is for ever set aside by the fact that, as early as the days of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, the great day, and especially the fearful doom of the ungodly, were foretold. "Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds."[2] This fact also demonstrates that the Lord will not punish for the mere pleasure of punishing. Why does he give warning of that day? Why are his messengers sent to warn men to flee from the wrath to come? Why are these messages delivered with so earnest entreaty and expostulation, so that his servants say, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."[3] As creatures, formed by his hand, he has not, and cannot have, any pleasure in rendering them unhappy; but, as rebels against his authority, enemies to his character and government, and the good order of his universal empire, and obstinate rejecters of his scheme of mercy and reconciliation, he will take pleasure in inflicting on them the punishment which his justice requires. The reward of the righteous is a kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world; but the fire into which the wicked will be driven, is said to be prepared, not for them, but for the devil and his angels.[4] In this significant manner, God has been pleased to teach us, that his punishments are prepared, not for his creatures, as such, but only for sinners, and in view of *sins* already committed. Must he, to secure himself from disgrace and reproach, be able to plead that he has been taken by surprise, and that, from the beginning of the world, he had never expected the fearful result? If the proceedings of this great day will be so glorious to God that he will regard them with pleasure through all

[1] 2 Thes. i. 9, 10. [2] Jude 14, 15. [3] 2 Cor. v. 20. [4] Matt. xxv. 34, 41.

future eternity, why may he not have regarded them with pleasure through all eternity past?

The objection, originating in dislike of God's justice, wholly misrepresents the character of his righteous judgment. It leaps from the creation of man to the final doom of the wicked, and wholly overlooks the intermediate cause of that doom. It proceeds as if sin were a very inconsiderable matter, and as if it must have been so regarded by God; and, therefore, it represents the punishment inflicted for it as if inflicted for its own sake. The sentence pronounced will be, in the judgment of God, for just and sufficient cause; and, in all the purpose of God respecting that sentence, the cause has been contemplated. What God does, and why he does it, are equally included in the divine purpose; and this connection the objection wholly overlooks. God did not regard sin as a trifling thing, when, on account of it, he destroyed the old world with the flood; and, as if to answer the very objection now before us, and convince men that he did not make them for the pleasure of destroying them, it is recorded: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at his heart."[1]

Our best judgment decides that the world ought not to have been made without a purpose, and that, for its mighty movements now to proceed without any purpose, is infinitely undesirable. The best work of human hands that we contemplate with any pleasure, has been formed with some purpose; and no intelligent being can view the works of God with satisfaction, if he can imagine them to have been undertaken and executed without design. Who would not grieve to think that this vast machinery is moving to accomplish no end; that the planets are hurled through space wildly, guided in their course, and controlled in their velocity, by no wise counsel; that the sun shines, that animals exist, that immortal man lives, moves, and has his being, without purpose? In this view, what an enigma is our life? Our understandings may consent not to comprehend the purpose for which the world was made, but to consent that it was made for no purpose, they cannot. Our intelligent natures wholly reject the thought.

[1] Gen. vi. 6, 7.

The doctrine of God's purpose, while it recommends itself to our understandings, applies a test to the moral principles of our hearts. If God has a purpose, we should delight to study it, and rejoice in the accomplishment of it; and our hearts and lives should be regulated in harmony with it. When we prefer that God should have no purpose, or that it should be different from what it is, our hearts cannot be right in his sight. If we loved him as we ought, we should rejoice in the accomplishment of his will, and view with pleasure the unfolding of his grand designs. Holy angels study the mystery of redeeming love, and learn, from the dispensations toward the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.[1] If right principles prevailed in our hearts, we would not presume to dictate to the Infinitely Wise, nor find fault with his plans, but wait with pleasure on the development of his will: and when we cannot see the wisdom and goodness of his works, we should, in the simplicity of faith, rest assured that his plan, when fully unfolded, will be found most righteous and most wise.

CHAPTER II.

WORKS OF GOD—CREATION.

GOD CREATED ALL THINGS OUT OF NOTHING.[2]

Originally, nothing existed but God; no matter, out of which visible things were formed, and no spiritual substance, out of which angels and human souls were made; but God gave to all things that exist their entire being.

It has been argued that matter cannot be eternal, because self-existence is too noble a property to be attributed to an inferior nature; but this argument is not satisfactory. Why may not a small thing exist without a cause, as well as a greater? The producing of some particular effect we may conceive to be easier for a

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[1] Eph. iii. 10.

[2] Gen. i.; Neh. ix. 6; Job ix. 9; Ps. lxxxix. 11; xcv. 5; ciii. 19; civ. 4, 19; Col. i. 16; Rev. iv. 11; Heb. iii. 4; xi. 3; Acts xvii. 24.

higher nature than a lower; but, in self-production, the effect is equal to the cause, and the difficulty of producing it must be as great for the one nature as for the other. In all such *à priori* reasoning, we are liable to deceive ourselves; and perhaps the danger is greatest where the reasoning appears most profound. For aught that philosophy can teach us, an atom of matter is absolutely indestructible; and, on philosophical principles, if it must exist through future eternity, it may have existed through past eternity. The miracle of creation is as far beyond the demonstrations of philosophy as the miracle of annihilation. When we have proved the existence of a God, able to work miracles, a probability arises that matter may be a production of his power, and we may see creative intelligence displayed in the properties and quantities of the various kinds of matter, and their adaptedness to beneficial purposes. But, for decisive proof that all things were made out of nothing, we turn to the word of God, and receive it as a truth of faith, rather than of reason. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."[1]

In the text just quoted, the doctrine of creation is not expressed in the language in which it is most commonly stated. It is not said the world was made out of nothing; but the same idea is expressed in a different manner. When we see a statue, we see the marble of which it consists; and when we see a house, we see the materials of which it is constructed. Paul teaches that the world which we see was not made of the visible substances that we behold, *i. e.*, it was not formed of pre-existent matter, but the materials of which it now appears to be formed, were brought into existence at the time when the things themselves were created.

The work of creation was performed without effort. God spake, and it was done. He said, let there be light, and there was light. After working six days, he rested on the seventh; not because he was weary, but that the seventh day might be sanctified, and made a day of rest for man. Wherefore it is said, the sabbath was made for man.[2]

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[1] Heb. xi. 3.

[2] Mark ii. 27.

From an examination of the earth's crust, geologists have discovered, as they think, that animals and plants existed long before the Mosaic date of creation. Methods have been proposed to reconcile the account, as contained in the first chapter of Genesis, with these professed discoveries. Some have supposed each of the days of creation to have been a long period of years. The seventh day of rest, or cessation from the work of creating, they understand to have continued to the present time, though nearly six thousand years have passed; and they suppose that each of the preceding days may have included an equally long period. Others understand "the beginning" mentioned in the first verse of the history, to refer to a time long anterior to that referred to in the second verse, "the earth was without form, &c." A similar transition, though not so sudden, is made in the first chapter of John: "In the beginning was the word;—and the word was made flesh."[1] Many divines have been disposed to regard the science of geology with suspicion, and to consider its deductions as inimical to the faith. But there can be no just ground to fear science, in any of its departments, so long as it pursues its investigations legitimately, and makes its deductions with becoming modesty. The Author of the Bible is the maker of the world, and the author of all truth; and his works and his word must harmonize, for truth is always consistent. Passages in his word have been thought to be inconsistent with each other; but a more careful examination has shown their harmony, and we need not fear but that due investigation will show the word to be consistent with all the legitimate deductions of science.

The undesigned coincidences which have been discovered in the Scripture narratives, constitute a highly satisfactory part of the internal evidence which the bible contains, that its records are true. The proof which these furnish is always the more satisfactory, the more manifest it is that the coincidence was undesigned. When two portions of Scripture, which appeared to disagree with each other, have been found, on careful investigation, to be perfectly harmonious, a coincidence has been discovered, that has the best possible evidence that it was undesigned. In this way the supposed discrepancies, which at first embarrassed us, turn out to

[1] John i. 1–14.

the establishment of our faith; and when some still remain which we have not yet learned to harmonize, we are taught to wait patiently, with the confident expectation that these dark places also will at some time be illuminated. The same faith and patience should be exercised when science and Scripture are supposed to disagree. The infidel delights to point out apparent discrepancies in Scripture, and he exults when he can announce some supposed discovery of science inconsistent with the word of revelation. While the infidel triumphs, men of weak faith stagger; but it is truly a weak faith that cannot withstand such a shock. We might as well doubt whether the sun shines, when his brilliance is eclipsed by a passing cloud. The mass of evidence that the Bible is the true word of God, is so great that we can well afford to wait till the temporary cloud passes, with the confident expectation that the light will again shine, perhaps with increased splendor. Geology is yet a recent science. What it will do ultimately for the cause of truth, future years must decide, and it is unwise to fear the result. We may trust that the ark of God will be carried through safely. Already, to some extent, the discoveries of the new science have turned out to the establishment of the faith. It has penetrated a very small distance below the earth's surface, and, in the successive deposits of animal remains, it has found a record from which it professes to read the order in which the various species of animals came into being. Between this record and that of Moses, there is an undesigned coincidence. It is especially remarkable that, by the general consent of geologists, human remains are found only in the last of the animal deposits. This fact points to a time agreeing well with the Mosaic date of creation, when men began to exist, and when, of course, a creating power was exerted. If geology can establish that, previous to this, a convulsion of nature desolated the earth, and buried a whole generation of inferior animals in its caverns, be it so. We will listen to her arguments, and weigh them well; but we cannot omit to notice the agreement of her facts with the faithful record of inspiration. If geology were to carry back the origin of the human race to a date long anterior to that of Moses, she would contradict, not only the Bible, but all history, written and traditionary. It cannot be accounted for, that our knowledge of ancient history should be limited to so recent a period, if the race had previously existed

through thousands of generations. The progress in the settlement of the world, the establishment of ancient kingdoms, and the building of cities, are spread out before us on the pages of history, and geology does not contradict the record.

Although science will never contradict Scripture, it may correct erroneous inferences from it, and, in doing this, may incidentally demonstrate the wisdom from which the Bible emanated. When we have arrived at mature years, we call to mind instructions that we received in our childhood from a wise father, and that were adapted to the purpose for which they were designed. They did not teach the sciences which we have since learned, but they taught us nothing contrary; and we are now able to see, in what was said and what was omitted to be said, that the father fully understood the sciences, which it was then no part of his design to teach us. Had he not understood them, he would have employed other forms of speech, and we should be able to recollect some word or words that would betray his ignorance. So the false revelations of the heathen world contradict science. Some of them contradict the very first lessons in geography, and a child in a christian school can prove them to be false. But science, in all its advancement, though it has made its greatest attainments in the lands where the Bible is most known, has found nothing in the Bible to contradict. The only rational way to account for this, is to suppose that the Author of the Bible understood the sciences. We nowhere read in this work that the earth is supported by an elephant, and that the elephant stands on a tortoise; but we read, "He hangeth the earth upon nothing,"[1] a statement which, made in the very infancy of revelation, may satisfy us that the author of the Bible understood the mechanism of the universe. In a past age of ignorance, men supposed that Joshua's command to the sun to stand still, disproved the Copernican system of astronomy; but this childish inference from the language of Scripture, is now well understood to be unwarranted. Men of science, who firmly believe the Copernican system, speak as freely of the sun rising and the sun setting, as those who never have heard that these appearances are owing to the earth's rotation. Future science may teach us to correct other erroneous inferences which many have drawn from

[1] Job xxvi. 7.

the Scripture; and we should be content to learn. The result will give further proof that the Author of Nature is the author of the Bible.

Our hearts receive a strong impression of the power, wisdom and goodness of the Lord, when we dwell on the thought that he made the heavens and the earth, with all that they contain. Above all, when we reflect that he made us, and not we ourselves, we are constrained to acknowledge his right to require what service, praise and glory we are capable of rendering. He is the former of our bodies, and the father of our spirits; and shall we not render to him that which is his own? Shall we not serve and glorify him with our bodies and our spirits, which are his? His right, by virtue of redemption, may present stronger claims, but his right by virtue of creation, is sufficient to establish our obligation, and we ought to recognise its force.

CHAPTER III.

WORKS OF GOD.—PROVIDENCE.

Let us approach nearer to the object of our supreme love. Such a being as God would be worthy of our hearts' best affection, if we were wholly under the dominion of another Lord, and owed our existence to another creative power. Like the Queen of Sheba, when she heard of the wisdom and glory of Solomon, we might, with great propriety, desire to visit the remote palace of Jehovah, that we might learn his character, and the arrangements of his empire. If God, after creating the world, had left the management of it in other hands, and had withdrawn to employ himself in other works, our inquiries might well follow him, and we might laudably seek to know our Creator. But God is not far from us. He did not, on making the world, leave it to itself, or commit it into other hands; but it is an object of his constant care, and his hand is concerned in all its movements. Whether we look on the right hand, or on the left, we can see where he doth work; and, in the display of his wisdom, power, and goodness, which at every moment meets our eyes, we find continued incitements to adore and love.

God's care of his creation, is termed Providence; and includes Preservation and Government.

Section I.—PRESERVATION.

All created things are kept in being by the will and power of God.[1]

We can as little understand the act of Providence, as that of creation; but we know that both are acts of God, implying both his will and power. That a continued preserving act is necessary to keep his creatures in being, ought not to be doubted. The expression, "upholding all things,"[2] clearly denotes such an act. An architect may build a house, which, when once completed, may stand, independent of his labor and skill, a monument of both, when he has fallen by the hand of death; and we are prone to conceive that the work of God might equally stand, if left to itself, without his constant care and support. But the cases are widely different. The human architect finds the materials which he uses already in existence; and his whole work consists in changing their form, and combining them in a new order. The substances used did not receive their existence from him; and the independent being which they possessed before the architect touched them, they retain after his hand has been withdrawn. But the very substance, as well as the form, of all created things, came from the hand of God; and the withdrawal of that hand would leave their being unsupported, or the expression, "upholding all things," has no appropriate meaning.

Many have maintained that the preserving act not only has the same author as the creating act, but is identical with it. They consider it philosophically true that preservation is a perpetual creation. All created existence is conceived to terminate at every moment by its natural tendency to annihilation, and to be reproduced by a new creative act. But, notwithstanding the ingenious arguments which have been advanced in support of this opinion, philosophy perseveres in distinguishing between the two acts, regarding creation as miraculous, and preservation, as conformed to

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[1] Job i. 21; v. 18; Ps. xxxiii. 10–15; ciii. 3–5, 10; civ. 27–30; cxxvii. 1, 2; Prov. xvi. 9; Matt. v. 45; x. 29; Luke xii. 6; Acts xvii. 28.

[2] Heb. i. 3.

the laws of nature. We are prone to conceive, that, to bring from non-existence into existence, differs from the preservation of existence already bestowed. It is enough, for every practical purpose, to attribute the preservation of all things to the power and will of the same being that originally created them. At his will, the world came into existence; and, at his will, it continues to exist.

Section II.—GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL.

All created things are so under God's control, that their changes take place according to his purpose.[1]

Created things are perpetually operating on each other in the relation of cause and effect. The properties and powers by which they so operate, were given to each of them in their creation, and are continued in the act of preservation. It follows, therefore, that all created things operate on each other, and produce changes in each other, by the will and power of God. If they are dependent for their existence, they must be, for their properties and powers, and, of consequence, for their operations.

God's control over all events that happen, is abundantly taught in the Scriptures; which represent the wind,[2] the rain,[3] pestilence,[4] plenty,[5] grass,[6] the fowls of the air,[7] the hairs of the head,[8] &c., as objects of his providence.

The Scriptures not only attribute events to the overruling hand of God, but they represent him as ordering them for the accomplishment of some purpose. The grass grows, that it may give food.[9] Pestilence is sent, that men may be punished for their sins.[10] Joseph was sent into Egypt, to preserve much people alive.[11] Nor are there a few events only which are so ordered; but it is said, He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The declaration, "All things work together for good,"[12] &c., could not be true, if God's control were not alike extended to all events, causing them all to co-operate in the fulfilment of his purpose.

Some persons are unwilling to attribute to God the care and

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[1] 2 Chron. xx. 6; Ps. civ. 4, 7, 10, 13, 14, 19, 32; Prov. xvi. 9; Ps. lxxvi. 10; Dan. iv. 35; Rom. viii. 28; Eph. i. 11.

[2] Jonah iv. 8. [3] Matt. v. 45. [4] Lev. xxvi. 25. [5] Gen. xxvii. 28.
[6] Matt. vi. 30. [7] Matt. vi. 26. [8] Matt. x. 30. [9] Ps. civ. 14.
[10] 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. [11] Gen. xlv. 7. [12] Rom. viii. 28.

management of minute and unimportant events. They consider it beneath his dignity to be concerned about such trivial matters. They believe in a General Providence over the affairs of the world, exercised by general laws; but a Particular Providence, exercised over every particular incident of every man's life, enters not into their creed. But the Scriptures are plain on this subject. The fall of a sparrow is a very trivial event, yet it is affirmed by the teacher from heaven, to be not without our heavenly Father.[1] If great events happen according to general laws, it is equally true of small ones; and the operation of these laws, in the latter case, must be as well understood, and as perfectly controlled, as in the former. Moreover, it often happens, that very important events depend on others that are in themselves trivial and unimportant. The King of Israel was slain,[2] and God's prophecy concerning him was fulfilled, by an arrow shot at a venture. How many very minute circumstances must have concurred in this act! That the arrow was shot at all—that it was then shot—that it was precisely so directed, and with precisely the necessary force—and that it met no obstacle on its way: all these concurred, and all these must have been under the control of Him, in whose hand was the life of the king. As God's greatness permitted him to create the minutest of his works, so it permits him to take care of them; and this care is as easy and undistracting to him, as if his whole energy were directed to the care and benefit of a single man or angel.

The objects of God's Providence are all created things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational. Some of these, as angels and men, are moral agents. All others, viewed as causing change of any kind, may be classed together as natural agents. With reference to this division of the agencies under his control, the government of God may be divided into natural and moral.

Section III.—NATURAL GOVERNMENT.

Among our earliest lessons, we learn that the relation of cause and effect exists, and that events occur because of this relation in an established order of sequence. Were the order of succession not established, or were we ignorant of it, we should be unable to

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[1] Matt. x. 29. [2] 1 Kings xxii. 34.

manage the most common concerns of life. If food sometimes nourished, and sometimes poisoned, or if we were incapable of learning whether the nutritive quality belonged to bread, or to arsenic, we should be unable to regulate the process of eating, so necessary to the preservation of life. But our Creator has made us capable of observing the sequences of nature, and of learning the order in which they occur, and the relation of cause and effect, which the parts of the succession sustain to each other. The study of these sequences is the business of philosophy; but philosophy is not confined to the university, or the lecture-room. It is found in every man's walk, and in the every-day experience of life. The child begins to learn it in the cradle; and without some knowledge of it, men would not know how to shun the flood, the flames, or the precipice.

In all departments of knowledge we classify the things known; and the sequences of nature, classified, become what we call laws of nature. These are only the regular modes in which the sequences of nature occur. In the phrase, law of nature, the term law is used in a transferred sense. When employed in morals, it implies an authority commanding, and a subject bound to obey. But nature is not a being possessing authority; and natural things are not capable of obedience in the proper sense. In morals, laws given may be disobeyed; but the processes of nature always conform to what are called the laws of nature. The laws of nature may be regarded as the modes in which the providence of God operates. His will has determined the relation of cause and effect; and, therefore, the laws of nature are the orders of sequence, in which it is his will, that the changes of natural things should occur.

When we contemplate the order which prevails in the natural world, we behold the exhibition of the wisdom which God's providence displays. His natural government, as well as his moral, abounds with wisdom. All his reasons for planning the system of things precisely as it is we cannot presume to understand; but the advantage resulting from its order meets us in every experience of life. It would be to no purpose that we have been so made as to be capable of observing the sequences of nature, if these sequences took place without order. If chaos reigned in the succession of events, philosophy would be impossible, and equally impossible the most common arts of life. Reason would be an unavailing gift;

and, if human life were not filled with perpetual terror, the exemption would arise rather from inability to comprehend its danger, than from the circumstances of its situation.

Section IV.—MORAL GOVERNMENT.

A voluntary agent, with a sense of right and wrong, we call a moral agent. Such an agent is a proper subject of moral law. He may be commanded, and he can obey or disobey. He can feel the force of moral obligation, and be affected by self-approbation or remorse.

Moral law is not an established order of sequence, as the laws of nature are. Some have sought to find an agreement between them in this particular, by referring to the fact, that a moral action has consequences inseparably connected with it, which result from its moral quality. But the connection of these consequences with the moral action belongs rather to the class of natural sequences. Like other natural sequences, the order is inviolable. But moral law may be violated. The order of sequence which moral law aims to regulate, is that which subsists between the command and the action, not between the action and its consequences. In the first of these sequences, not in the last, the obedience or disobedience of moral law appears. If moral law were an established order of sequence, as natural law is, none but God could violate it, as none but he can work miracles. But, while God cannot commit sin, which is a transgression of moral law, it may be committed by angels and men, as sad experience has proved.

The distinction which has been drawn between natural and moral law must be kept in view, to understand the difference between natural and moral government. Moral government is a department of God's universal administration, specially adapted to moral agents, furnishing scope for the exercise of their moral agency, as, also, on God's part, for the exercise of his justice. It is not inconsistent with the rest of his administration, but is distinct from the rest, and is the holy of holies, in which the great Supreme manifests his highest glory. It is true, that in this the will of God is not invariably done; whereas, in his natural government, he worketh all things after the counsel of his will; but it must be remembered that the term will is used in different senses. The will which is violated in moral government is the will of pre-

cept; that which is invariably executed in natural government is the will of purpose. The whole of God's moral government perfectly accords with his purpose. It was his purpose to institute it; to create moral agents, to give them a moral law, a will of precept, which they, as free agents, might violate or not; to permit the violation, and to hold them responsible for it. All this God purposed, and all this he has accomplished. Because the term will is used in two senses, manifestly distinct from each other, it becomes necessary, in our use of it, to keep the distinction in view, lest our reasonings be confused.

The general proposition, under the head of Government, page 117, was stated thus: "All God's creatures are so under his control, that their changes take place according to his purpose." The truth of this, with respect to his natural government, will be readily admitted. An important part of the changes which take place in the world, consists of the actions performed by moral agents. In applying the proposition to these, it becomes necessary to distinguish between the efficient and permissive purpose of God. Even the most sinful action cannot take place without his permission; and, in this view, the proposition extends to the moral, as well as to the natural government of God.

Section V.—FREE AGENCY.

What is free agency? If it signifies freedom from accountability to a higher power, there is no free agent but God. This, however, is not the sense in which the term is technically employed, and in which it denotes voluntary agency — agency without compulsion.

A creature who acts voluntarily, and knows the difference between right and wrong, is a proper subject of moral government. The common sense of mankind holds such an one accountable for his actions. We do not enter into a metaphysical inquiry to ascertain by what mental process the volition was formed; but it is enough for us to know that it was formed. If a man does what he did not intend to do, we admit the plea of involuntariness; but, when the intention to perpetrate the deed is proved, together with the knowledge of its criminality, no metaphysical subtleties exempt him, in the uniform judgment of mankind, from being held accountable.

Some have maintained that, in order to responsible agency, it is necessary that the will should have a self-determining power. It is, they maintain, not only necessary that the agent should have acted voluntarily, but he should have the power to will otherwise than he did. That he should have had the power to *act* otherwise than he did, is implied in his acting voluntarily, *i. e.* without compulsion, and is, therefore, necessary to his accountability; but the power to *will* otherwise than he did, is a superaddition to voluntariness, which the common sense of mankind does not inquire into; yet, as a metaphysical perplexity, it claims our attention.

Self-determining power of the will.—It is inconsistent with philosophical accuracy to speak of the will as determining or deciding. The faculties of the mind are not distinct agents, possessing a separate existence from the mind itself. We may say that a man understands or wills, or that his mind understands or wills; but to say that his understanding understands, or his will wills, is bad philosophy. If it be conceived that the will determines itself, as the magnetic needle determines its position, without reasoning, and without choice, a supposition is admitted which will not at all accord with the views of those who advocate the self-determining power of the will. But, if it be conceived that the will determines by choice, or any other mental process, then the will is represented as a distinct agent, having a mind of its own.

Power of the will.—Here is another incongruity. In the external acts of men, power and will are concomitants necessary to the act. Without either, the act cannot be. But to an act of willing, what is necessary besides the will itself? What power must be conjoined with it? What a supposition it would be, that the will has a will to put forth a volition, but has not the power! Yet something like this must be conceived, to give a distinct and intelligible meaning to the phrase, "self-determining *power* of the will."

Section VI.—MORAL NECESSITY.

If a number of dice be put into a box and thrown out on a table, it is certain that every one will take some position, and will lie on some one of its six sides; but no one can foretell what the several positions will be, or on which of the six sides each one will lie. These positions are attributed to chance; and, in a calculation of chances, this case may be adduced as an appropriate example. But

though no one will undertake to foretell what position each die will assume, yet every one believes that all its motion, till its final position is assumed, is in accordance with the laws of nature, and that the fall from the box is not more determined by these laws than the final position. A mind which could go through the calculation, and estimate the precise effect of the forces applied, from the beginning to the end, on each die, from the position in which it started, might determine the result with as much certainty as the astronomer feels in computing an eclipse. The position of the die is not more the effect of chance than the occurrence of the eclipse. Chance is, in this case at least, a relative term — having reference to our ignorance.

That a large part of the events which we esteem contingent are so merely with reference to our ignorance, everybody will admit; but it is still a question, whether there is any absolute contingency in the world. Are there any events which occur that do not conform to an established order of sequence?

The doctrine of necessity denies the existence of absolute contingency, and maintains that the relation of cause and effect, with its established order of sequence, is not only general, but universal. In opposition to this doctrine, many maintain that human actions do not conform to an established order of sequence; and it is argued that such conformity would render man a mere machine, moving as he is moved, and, therefore, not accountable for his actions. To this argument it is replied, that the doctrine fully admits the distinction between man as a living, thinking, willing, and moral being, and a mere machine, which neither lives nor thinks; and that this difference is the foundation of his accountability. It is argued, that if his actions did not follow from his volitions, by an established order of sequence, they would not be voluntary, and he would not be accountable for them. The validity of this argument, so far as it goes, probably no one will deny; and the question becomes narrowed down to this: Do human volitions occur as effects of antecedent causes, in an established order of sequence? The question is one of great difficulty; and, though the minds of the ablest reasoners have been employed on it, no solution has been reached that gives general satisfaction. The very difficulty of it may satisfy us that our benevolent Creator has not made the solution of it necessary, either to our faith or our

duty; and we might leave the puzzling investigation to those powerful minds that are best fitted to grapple with such abstrusities, were it not that the subject is intruding itself into the minds of all inquirers, and, to some extent, affecting their theological opinions. It is, therefore, desirable to ascertain, if possible, wherein the difficulty of the subject consists, and how far it is connected with our faith or practice.

Analogy favors the doctrine of necessity. A regular order of sequence is admitted to exist throughout the material world. It is admitted to exist also, to some extent, in the operations of the human mind. Impressions on the organs of sense produce their appropriate sensations in the mind, according to fixed laws. Perceptions follow, and judgments, and trains of reasoning, all of which so far conform to fixed laws, that the order of their succession is studied with a view to find out these laws; and the science of mental philosophy proceeds on the supposition that such laws exist, and employs itself in finding them out. The train of mental operations, beginning with the sensation which immediately follows the impression on the organs of sense, terminates with the volition which immediately precedes muscular action. A regular order of sequence may be traced from the first, through much of the mental process that is moving on toward the ultimate volition. Thence onward we again espy the line of succession in the action which follows, and in all its effects. At most, but a few links only in the chain can be wanting; and analogy favours the conclusion that these are not absent, but that they exist even if we cannot trace them.

An argument for the doctrine of necessity may be drawn from the fact that human volitions are every day made a subject of calculation. A man who would not attempt to calculate the position which a thrown die will assume, will judge what a known individual will determine to do in given circumstances; and so much does he rely on the correctness of his calculation, that he will be governed by it in some of his most important concerns. It is thus that a sagacious general often anticipates the movements of his enemy. All this would be impossible if the sequences of human volitions were wild and lawless.

The doctrine of necessity has been argued from God's foreknowledge. The more sagacious any one is, the more successfully

he can judge beforehand what a known individual will do in given circumstances. As a wise man may foreknow, much more can the all-wise God. If all events are contained in their causes, and are to be developed in due time, in conformity to an established order of sequence, we can conceive that the Omniscient One sees these events in their causes, and foreknows their future development with infallible certainty. On the other hand, if there is absolute contingency in the world, it is out of our power to con ceive how even God himself can foreknow it, and it is alleged that he may be disappointed, and perhaps defeated in some of his plans by its occurrence.

The leading arguments against the doctrine are, that it is inconsistent with the free agency of man, and that it makes God the author of sin.

It is argued that the doctrine is inconsistent with the free agency of man. While we see the material world moving around us in obedience to the laws of nature, we are conscious that our acts are not directed by such a necessity. We choose every day which of two courses we will take, and the very choice, of which we are conscious, implies the power to take either. The faculty of choosing would be possessed in vain, if we were restricted to one of the courses by invincible necessity. There is no free agency where an individual is bound to one way, and can take no other.

To this the advocates of necessity reply, the freedom of our actions, of which consciousness testifies, is fully admitted in their doctrine. Freedom of action consists in doing what we please. Compulsion to act against our will is physical necessity. The moral necessity which is contended for, respects, not the relation of the volition to the subsequent action, but its relation to antecedent causes. When a man's volitions are known to be determined by strong ruling principles of action, it is maintained that his free agency is as perfect as if they were the result of long continued deliberation, or proceeded from no known cause. While we are conscious that we act from choice, and are therefore free agents, we are equally conscious that our choice itself is, in many cases, determined instantly and firmly by strong ruling principles; and that this fact, instead of detracting from the free agency and virtue of our deeds, is our highest praise.

It is further argued, that the doctrine makes God the author of

sin. The laws of nature, in the material world, are viewed as God's mode of operation. If the sun shines, and the rain descends, it is God who gives light to his creatures, and fertilizes the ground for their benefit; and when storms rage, and hurricanes sweep over the land, these, arising according to the laws of nature which he has established, are still regarded as God's operation. In every case the cause of the cause is the cause of the effect. If fixed laws govern with like necessity in the department of morals, it is argued that God must be viewed as the author of all that happens in obedience to these laws. Having himself established them, and created the causes which contain all the effects to be developed in the established order of sequence, he is as truly the author of these effects as if they proceeded immediately from his hand. It can no longer be said that sin has place by his permission, any more than it can be said that a storm arises by his permission. Even sin must, like the storm, be viewed as God operating. This is the argument which the advocates of necessity find it most difficult to answer.

The philosophical arguments on this question appear to me to preponderate on the side of necessity. Indeed, how philosophy could decide against it, cannot well be conceived. She begins her investigations with the assumption that laws of nature do exist, and she makes it her business to find out what these laws are. If she observes any events that do not conform to known laws, she still assumes that there is a law which governs them, and she renews her effort to find it out. Hence, for philosophy to decide that there are events which conform to no law, would be to abandon the foundation on which she has ever stood. If such events ever occur, they belong to a department of nature which is beyond the walks of philosophy.

As a theological question, the doctrine of necessity is seriously embarrassed by the difficulty respecting the authorship of sin. The whole subject of God's providence over sin, is exceedingly difficult. A future section will be devoted to the consideration of it.

Truth, whether ascertained by philosophy or theology, must be consistent with itself. But it ought to be remembered, that the tests by which philosophy ascertains truth, are unequal to those which theology applies. Philosophy allows conclusions to be drawn from

an induction of particulars, which is unavoidably incomplete. As far as our individual observation has extended, gravitation is found at every part of the earth's surface. From the testimony of others, we know that it exists wherever human foot has trodden. This induction is sufficient for philosophy, and she draws her conclusion that gravitation exists at every part of the earth's surface, even in the regions denied to the habitation or approach of men. If some voyagers should testify that, on a certain island in the Pacific, gravitation ceases to operate at the distance of ten feet above the earth's surface, the announcement, if deemed worthy of credence, would startle the whole race of philosophers, who would hasten to institute the experiments necessary to determine the truth or falsehood of the strange report. Should it be found, on trial, that all bodies thrown ten feet into the air, on that island, go off into unknown space, philosophers would inquire into the cause of this phenomenon, that is, would endeavor to find a law to which it conforms. Thus philosophy often finds it necessary to rectify her previous conclusions, because these were formed from an incomplete induction of particulars. To Siamese philosophy, it was impossible for water to become solid, so as to bear up carriages of burden. So, much of our wisest philosophy may be the erroneous conclusions of our ignorance. God's knowledge is perfect, and with him mistake is impossible. If human testimony can suffice to rectify a conclusion of philosophy, much more ought the testimony of God to be sufficient. A "thus saith the Lord," is a better foundation for faith than all the deductions of human philosophy, and then only is faith divine, when it stands on this foundation.

Let us imagine all created things to have been brought into being, and left, for a time, in a wild state, before the laws of nature were enacted. In this chaos, the atoms would not regard the very first law of philosophy, which enjoins that matter at rest shall continue at rest; and, when put in motion, shall move forward in a right line with uniform velocity. All the affinities and elective attractions, now so familiar to the chemist, would be unknown to the various species of matter, and unobserved by them. Particles would dance and rest alternately in the most capricious manner. They would attract each other for a time, and then repel with unaccountable inconstancy. They would remain for a period in close embrace, and then divorce each other with the changeableness of

fickle lovers. If, when the fiat of Jehovah reduced this confusion to order by subjecting all the movements to regular laws, it was his pleasure to except some little region of his vast empire from the operation of these laws, what can philosophy say against it? If such exception was made, it was doubtless made for wise reasons; perhaps to show to his celestial school of intelligences the benefit of order by retaining a memorial of the ancient chaos; as the manna was laid up in the ark for the benefit of the Israelites. If such a region was permitted to remain, it was doubtless so bounded and shut in, that its lawless confusion cannot disturb the order of the universal empire. Now, if it should be discovered that the link of connection between volition and the cause or causes antecedent, is the place, and the only place that God has left without law, philosophy must be dumb. If God says that it is so, we are bound to believe it; and we may infer that he so keeps this lawless connection under control, that it shall not subvert his government.

If the views which have been presented are correct, the following conclusions may be considered established: — 1. The doctrine of moral necessity is not inconsistent with the free-agency and accountability of man. 2. The doctrine cannot be disproved by human philosophy. 3. We ought not to admit any inference from it as an article of faith, unless it be supported by the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Section VII.—DESIGNS OF PROVIDENCE.

In the view which we have taken of God's providential govern ment, we have included the fact, that he so orders the events which occur, as to accomplish his purpose. This is called predestination. The purpose of God respects the end which he has in view; and also the means which he uses for the accomplishment of this end.

The doctrine of predestination teaches that no event comes to pass, which is not under the control of God; and that it is so ordered by him as to fulfil his purpose. If it would thwart his purpose, the event is prevented; or if, in part only it would conduce to his purpose, only so far is it permitted to happen. This divine control extends over all agents, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational; and is exercised over each in perfect accordance with its nature, and with all the laws of nature as originally established. Physical agents are controlled as physical

agents; and moral, as moral agents. The latter act as freely as if no providence over them existed. Their ends are chosen, their means adopted, and their accountability exists, just as if there were no predestination of God in the matter. Yet God is not unconcerned in any of these acts, but overrules each and all of them according to his pleasure.

The holy men of ancient times were accustomed to view the hand of God in everything with which they had to do; and the passages of Scripture are numerous, in which God's direction of man's affairs and actions is taught. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps."[1] "The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will."[2] The gardener has his rivulet, with which he waters his beds; and, by cutting a channel here, and damming up there, he directs the fertilizing stream to whatever part of his garden he pleases; while the water, however directed, moves according to its own natural tendency. So the king's heart moves according to its own inclination; but the directing hand of God guides his movements, though freely made, to the accomplishment of such ends as infinite wisdom has designed. The passages are also numerous, which show that this direction of events is for the accomplishment of some purpose. God meant it unto good.[3] All things work together for good.[4] Each particular event accomplishes some purpose; and the whole combined accomplishes the grand purpose, to which the particular purposes are subordinate. So he who builds a house, has, in adjusting each timber, a purpose subordinate to the general or final purpose for which the whole work was undertaken; and, to the accomplishment of which, the whole is directed.

The possibility that God should possess this complete control of all things, cannot be doubted by any who admit the doctrine of necessity. Even if human volitions are absolutely contingent, his control of overt acts must be conceived to be as perfect, as on the other hypothesis. As length and breadth are necessary to constitute area, as weight and velocity are necessary to constitute force; so volition and power are necessary to constitute action. He does not act, who has the will without the power, or the power without the will. Now, the power is in the hand of God, and under his

[1] Prov. xvi. 9. [2] Prov. xxi. 1. [3] Gen. l. 20. [4] Rom. viii. 28.

perfect control; and, therefore, whatever the will may be, no overt act can be performed but by his permission; and consequently, no influence can be brought to bear on any part of God's dominions, so as to disturb his administration. This hook God has in the nose of every rebellious subject; so that, however filled with rage, he cannot move but by God's permission.[1]

Again, even if human volition is absolutely contingent, it is still true, that men often fortell it with sufficient certainty or probability, to know how to direct their actions with respect to it. A sagacious sovereign knows the character of his subjects, and the parties which exist in his government; and he adapts the measures of his administration to meet the exigencies as they arise. Why cannot God, on the throne of the universe, manage the affairs of his government with equal skill? A human sovereign sometimes fails for want of time to deliberate. His enemies form their schemes, and their plots proceed to their accomplishment before he is aware of their designs; and, when they are discovered, he cannot command his resources, or digest his plan, in time to meet the emergency. But God sees every budding volition; and, as all his power may be exerted at any point of space, so all the resources of his infinite wisdom can arrange his plan, while the volition is taking its form as wisely and completely as if it were the result of an eternity of deliberation. God is verily able to govern the world; and who doubts that he is willing? And our belief that God governs the world, and predestinates its various events to accomplish the counsel of his will, is not dependent on a metaphysical speculation.

Section VIII.—PROVIDENCE OVER SIN.

Providence has been explained to be the care which God exercises over the world. Though this care is watchful and kind, sin has entered, bringing innumerable evils in its train, and is now mingling in the whole current of human enjoyment, and spreading havoc and death, where peace, order, life, and happiness, would have reigned undisturbed. How all this comes to pass, under the government of a God, infinitely wise, powerful, and good, is a question of great difficulty. The observations which follow, will not clear away the darkness in which the subject is involved; but

[1] 2 Kings xix. 28.

they may suffice to assist our faith, and guard our hearts from unworthy thoughts of the deity.

1. The fact of God's providence over sin, is incontrovertible, whatever difficulties attend its explanation. If there were anything from which he would stand aloof, it would be sin, the abominable thing which he hates; but nothing so clearly shows his providence to be universal as the abundant proof which is furnished, that it extends over sin. Indeed, if it kept at a distance from everything sinful, it would abandon all human affairs, which are thoroughly mixed with sin. The Scriptures speak, in very clear and strong terms, of God's control over sinful agents. He brought the Chaldeans against Jerusalem,[1] and stirred up the Medes against Babylon.[2] These were nations composed of wicked men, and could not have been moved by the providence of God, if wicked agents were not under his control. Wicked men are called the rod, the staff, the ax, the saw, in his hand;[3] and are therefore moved by him as these instruments are, by the hand of him who uses them. The Scriptures descend with still greater particularity to the very acts of wicked agents, in which their wickedness is exhibited, and attributes these to God. So Shimei's cursing of David[4] and Absalom's lying with his father's wives;[5] wicked as these acts were, are, in the words of inspiration, ascribed to the God of holiness. Why is this, if it be not designed to teach us that the providence of God extends over sinful actions. So strong are some of the representations contained in the holy word, that, like the ascribing of repentance to God, they need to be explained by the general tenor of the sacred teachings. He blinds the eyes,[6] and hardens the hearts[7] of sinful men; and sends them strong delusions,[8] that they should believe a lie, and be damned; and he raised up[9] Pharoah, and hardened his heart,[10] that he might show his power in him. Such language was certainly designed to make a strong impression on our minds, that God exercises a perfect control over every sinful agent in all his acts; and it is not more clearly revealed, that God hates the wicked acts of wicked men, than that he controls and directs them to the accomplishment of his purpose. All this we are

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[1] Hab. i. 6. [2] Isaiah xiii. 17; Jer. li. 11. [3] Isaiah x. 5–15.
[4] 2 Sam. xvi. 11. [5] 2 Sam. xii. 12. [6] John xii. 40. [7] Rom. ix. 18.
[8] 2 Thess. ii. 11. [9] Ex. ix. 16. [10] Ex. vii. 13.

bound to believe, whatever mystery may attend it; and what we know concerning any subject, is not the less true, or the less firmly to be believed, because there are other things involved in it which we know not.

2. What we know not concerning God's providence over sin, respects him rather than ourselves; and we may, therefore, safely leave it for him to interpret. How to govern a world of sinful agents, is a problem which it is not necessary for us to solve, as the task has not been assigned us. Had God imposed the duty on us, he would doubtless have taught us how to perform it. But he has reserved it to himself; and he giveth no account of his matters. Instead, therefore, of being surprised that there are things in God's government which are inscrutable to us, we should have reason for surprise if it were otherwise. Earthly governments have their secrets, and these may especially relate to the management of the hostile. We must, without taking offence, permit the Sovereign Ruler of all to have his secrets, and to make known his ways only so far as he pleases. We are often, in appearance at least, exceedingly anxious to relieve the character of God from foul aspersions; but we may safely leave him to vindicate himself. We shall do well to look to it, that our very officiousness does not betray an unwillingness to repose entire confidence in the wisdom and goodness of his ways, when they are past our comprehension. Let the very darkness in which he leaves them be improved by us to the trial and strengthening of our faith.

3. The distinction between God's permission of sin, and his being the efficient cause of it, is one which we appear authorized to use to free our thoughts from embarrassment when we contemplate this subject. More than mere permission is implied in many of the expressions found in Scripture, that refer to the influence by which the current of sinful propensity is directed into this channel, rather than that. But the notion that God is the efficient agent in producing the sinful propensity, we are unable to reconcile with our ideas of his character; and it does not appear to be taught in the sacred volume. God is a sun, and moral darkness arises from the absence, rather than from the presence of his beams. We dare not doubt that, had it been his pleasure, he might have poured forth such a flood of holy influence from himself as would have effectually preserved the human race from all possibility of defilement;

and, that he did not do so, is his permission of sin. But every one readily conceives of this as very different from a positive efficiency in the production of moral evil. It is a good maxim, to consider all our good as coming from God, and give him the praise of it; and all our evil as our own, and give ourselves the blame of it. In like manner, when we see sin in others, and know that God is overruling it for good, we can blame them for the evil, and praise God for the good which he educes from it.

4. We should restrain our philosophy within due bounds, and not give ourselves up to its deductions when they would disturb our faith. We have already shown that philosophy is compelled to rely on inductions which are incomplete, and that her inferences have not equal authority with the declarations of God. We are so constituted that we rely on the uniformity of nature's laws, and therefore believe that they will operate in the future as they have operated in the past. This constitutional propensity is wisely given, fitting us to shape our course in the world; and, for all the purposes for which it was given, it does not deceive us; but there are limits within which the propensity must be restrained. A child asks the cause of something which he notices, and when we have answered, he asks, What is the cause of that? and when, in answering his successive inquiries, we have led his mind up to God as the First Cause, he asks, Who made God? We may very wisely tell him that God is self-existent; but this means nothing more than that his inquisitive philosophy must stop here, having reached its utmost bounds. Now, whether we can metaphysically account for it or not, there is a propensity in the human mind to regard each moral agent as a sort of original source of action, somewhat as we conceive of God. This propensity, perhaps as universal as the propensity to rely on the uniformity of nature's laws, may have been given us for the very purpose of checking our philosophy when it would presume to explain the origin of evil in the heart of a moral agent. Accustomed, as it is, to contemplate the relation of cause and effect, operating in an established order of sequence, it does not submit to consider man an original source of action, but labors to account for the moral evil in him by causes operating from without, and ultimately traces it to God. It may be well to inquire whether philosophy, when it pushes the doctrine of necessity into the inmost arcana of this subject, does not assume in the

premises from which it reasons, that there is a natural inertia in mind, as in matter; or, rather, a sort of natural immutability. Among the arguments in favor of moral necessity, it was stated that the volitions of a known individual under given influences, are often the subject of calculation; but, for successful calculation, the individual must be *known;* and in this, it is implied that he must possess some fixed character. A change in him, all the circumstances being the same, makes a change in the result. A chemical experiment now operates precisely as it would have done before the flood, because every atom of matter has precisely the same properties now that it had then. Matter has a natural immutability; but can this be predicated of mind? And does not philosophy assume it when it applies the doctrine of necessity to mental phenomena without any limitation, and boldly carries back the authorship of sin to God, as the First Cause. There is a tendency in the human mind to a fixed state of virtue or vice, by the power of habit; but a natural immutability of the mind, anterior to the formation of habits, philosophy ought not to assume. Matter, in each atom, is immutable; and it is mutable only in its combinations. The mind of man, though an uncompounded essence, is not immutable. God has made matter immutable; or operates immutably in matter. But if he has not chosen to operate in the same manner in mind, but has made each mind, in some sort, an original source of action, philosophy must submit to push her orders of sequence with confidence only where she has firm ground to stand on.

To illustrate the distinction attempted in the last paragraph, let us suppose a metallic globe placed on the sharp point of a pyramid. No human art could so adjust it that it would not fall to one side. Mathematically we may demonstrate the possibility of such an adjustment that the power of gravity, operating equally on every side, would retain it for ever in the same position. But, in spite of mathematics, the globe would fall to one side; and philosophy will seek to account for its fall as arising from some failure in the adjustment, or some external cause, as a breath of air, operating from without, and not from any changeableness in the globe itself. When once started in the descent, the globe has a tendency to motion in the direction taken, but it does not pass from rest to motion except from external influence. Now, if philosophy equally denies

that motion can originate in the mind, and maintains that its doctrine of necessity is applicable to the mind, not only when acting under the influence of habit, but as existing before habits were formed, does not philosophy assume a natural immutability of mind. in attributing the first start in the wrong way to a failure in God's adjustment, or to the operation of external causes, which have been brought into being and action by him? If philosophy assumes this in the premises from which it reasons, its conclusions are not to be trusted.

Conclusion.

Genuine piety in the heart prompts the inquiry which burst forth from the lips of the converted Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It asks to know the will of God, for the purpose of doing it, as naturally as the infant's appetite craves the appropriate food. The men of the world walk in their own ways, and fulfil the desires of their own minds; but the man of piety desires to walk in the way of the Lord, and to do that which is pleasing to him. Hence he delights to meditate on his law. The Bible would not be a book adapted to the state of his mind, if it did not contain precepts for the regulation of his conduct.

The infant's appetite not only craves food, but appropriate food; and this fact is alluded to in the words of Peter, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.[1] The Bible, the word of God, supplies the sincere milk which the child of grace needs and craves. It not only gives precepts, but precisely such precepts as are adapted to the holy affections of the new-born soul, and tend to increase and strengthen them. Paul delighted in the law of God, not simply because it was his law, but because it was holy, just and good.[2] The pure morality of Christ and his doctrine, even infidels acknowledge; and precisely the same morality appears in the decalogue, and in the two great precepts on which hang all the law and the prophets. The decalogue, written on the tables of stone by the finger of God, has been thought by some to be the first specimen of alphabetical writing known in the world. Whether this be true or not, it is certainly among the earliest specimens of which we have any know-

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[1] 1 Peter ii. 2.

[2] Rom. vii. 12.

ledge. The fact, that at so early a period a law so pure and perfect was given to mankind, is very remarkable, and can be satisfactorily accounted for only on the supposition that it emanated from God. The intrinsic excellence of this law corresponds well with the solemnity and grandeur of its promulgation from Sinai. The pious man admires its perfection and delights in its holiness, and sees in it a proof that the Bible which contains it is indeed the word of God.

When the desires are properly regulated within, all the outgoings of the soul will be in accordance with the will of God; and they will be so adapted to the circumstances of our being, as to show that the power which made the things that are without, is the same that works within us to will and to do. All the works of God, in heaven above, where the sun, moon and stars declare his glory, and in the earth beneath, which is full of his goodness, are fitted to excite our admiration and gratitude. We admire the habitation which our Creator has provided for us, so splendid and so richly furnished, and we sit, with overflowing gratitude, at the table which his Providence has spread before us with such profusion and variety.

The doctrine of General Providence suffices for the exercise of gratitude in the pious heart. The general arrangements of the world in which we are placed, show the benevolence of him who planned them; and we should have just cause of gratitude to him for the wise and beneficial arrangements, even if we conceived of him as leaving the world to the operation of the general laws which he has instituted, and giving no direction to them in the minute details of our daily experience. But genuine piety is no less displayed by resignation in the hour of suffering, than by gratitude in the general experience of enjoyment. Yet resignation to God under afflictions would be impossible, if they were not viewed as coming from the hand of God. Job was resigned under his affliction, because he considered it sent by God. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?" To the exercise of resignation, a belief in particular Providence is necessary. The general arrangements of Providence, which, because of their benevolence, have called forth our gratitude, may fail, in the particular exigency of our present condition, to meet our necessities. We suffer in consequence of this failure, and piety

prompts us to bear the suffering with resignation to the will of God; but this would be impossible if we did not believe that the particular event happens according to the will of God. We must view Providence, not merely as instituting general laws, but as directing the times and circumstances in which the operation of these laws shall cross our path.

In order to the further exercise of piety, the providence in which we believe must not only be particular, but it must be exercised with design. Resignation to blind fate is not piety. We must not only feel the hand of God in our affliction, but we must realise that it has been laid on us with design. We have to do, not so much with our Father's hand as with our Father's heart. It is not necessary to the exercise of piety, that we should be able to penetrate his design; but we must believe its existence. We are not required to understand or explain all the mystery attendant on the doctrine of predestination; but a belief of the doctrine is necessary to an intelligent exercise of pious resignation. A wise Providence, and to such only is intelligent piety resigned, operates with design.

Human depravity is prone to make an improper use of divine truth. The doctrine concerning God's will of purpose is made a pretext for neglecting his will of command, and an apology for past disobedience. The transgressor pleads, "who hath resisted his will?" But sincere piety leaves God to execute his will of purpose in his own way, and makes the will of precept its rule of duty. It leaves God to his work, and delights in it as the work of God. Where it cannot comprehend his design, it still trusts in him, and rejoices in the assurance that he does all things well. It recognises him as operating in all things without; and, in viewing all these operations, finds occasion for admiration, gratitude and resignation. But whenever a question of duty arises, it is decided, not by the inquiry, What has God done? or, What has he purposed to do? but, What has he commanded? The union of resignation and obedience in the same heart, is a test of true piety. Happy is he in whom their influence is combined. He can delight to do the will of God, and find a heaven in his obedience; and he can rejoice even in tribulation, and feel a bed of thorns, if God has laid him on it, to be a bed of down.

BOOK FOURTH.

DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE FALL AND PRESENT STATE OF MAN.

INTRODUCTION.

DUTY OF REPENTANCE.[1]

We have seen that religion is not confined to the intellect, but brings into exercise the strongest feelings of the heart. Love to God, and delight in his will and works, have been shown to be essential elements; and these are affections which do not play on the surface, but move the soul from its lowest depths. If, in our study of religious truth, we have proceeded thus far without feeling, without strong feeling, our labor has been unprofitable, and we would do well to begin anew. No time should be lost in securing the main end for which God's truth should be studied; and if heretofore we have treated it as we do the truths of other science, we should persevere in this course no longer, lest the profane use of sacred things become habitual, and provoke God to deny us his illuminating grace.

Love to God, and delight in his will and works, are holy and pleasurable exercises of the mind; but religion in a sinful being is necessarily attended with pain. To be at ease in sin, is a proof that the heart is dead, "dead in trespasses and sins." Every one whom the spirit of God quickens, becomes sensible of sin, and feels the pang of a broken heart on account of it. The anguish of

[1] *Matt.* iii. 2. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
Acts xvii. 30. The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

remorse may be alleviated by a sense of pardoning mercy; but the joy of pardon cannot stop the flow of penitence. Like the woman to whom much had been forgiven, the believer, while receiving his pardon with overflowing joy, does not lose his sense of sin, but is ready to wash the feet of his Lord with tears. These tears have their sweetness.

The necessity of repentance is abundantly taught in the sacred volume. The language of Christ is explicit, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."[1] We have no right to consider ourselves in the way to eternal life, if we are strangers to repentance. Nor will it suffice to have been at some time alarmed about our sin. A false repentance, which needs to be repented of, satisfies many a deluded soul. Genuine repentance is a deep-felt and abiding sense of sin, a condemnation of ourselves before God on account of it, a turning away from it with abhorrence and loathing, and a fixed purpose of soul never again to commit it, or be at peace with it. This sense of sin drives the soul to Christ, and unites with the exercise of faith in Christ, to distinguish genuine religion from the counterfeits with which the world abounds.

Reason teaches that it is the duty of men, as sinners, to repent of their sins. When one man has given just occasion of offence to another, by the common consent of mankind it is his duty to be sorry for his offence. If we have no sorrow for having offended God, we treat him with less respect than is due to a fellow-worm. Not to be sorry is to justify the offence, and virtually to repeat it. God searches our hearts, and knows our inmost thoughts; and, if we remain impenitent after having sinned against him, it is as if we told him to his face that we did right to treat his authority with contempt. Our impenitence insults the majesty of heaven, and defies his wrath.

But the duty of repentance is not left to be inferred from the common sense of mankind. It is true, that no command to repent is found in the decalogue. That summary of duty was given to men as men, and not as sinners. It was not designed to restore men to the favor of God, and, therefore, did not treat with them as sinners. But when the gospel began to be preached, its first proclamation was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[2] In all the ministry of the gospel, this is the first duty

[1] Luke xiii. 3. [2] Matt. iii. 2.

required of men. Without it, not a step can be taken in the way of return to God; and, without it, there is no possibility of obtaining the divine favor. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." It is, therefore, of the very highest importance to understand what repentance is, and to have such views of truth as will tend to produce it in our hearts.

When we approach a fellow-man whom we have offended, to offer to him our confessions, and seek his pardon, it is expected that we shall be sensible of having done wrong, shall regret the deed, blame ourselves for it, acknowledge his right to be displeased, and resolve, perhaps promise, to do so no more. All this must exist in repentance toward God, if we do not mean to repeat our insults to the Searcher of hearts. We may deceive a man like ourselves with professions of penitence that are insincere, and designed merely to propitiate him, but God cannot be deceived, and to attempt it is to mock him.

In order to sincere repentance toward God, it is indispensable that we should understand that we have sinned against him. Men do not usually compare their actions with his righteous law, but with the actions of other men. We walk according to the course of this world, and are satisfied if we conform to such rules of conduct as are esteemed reputable among men. Multitudes pass through life without any proper conviction of sin, and die impenitent, who have never examined and tried their conduct by a higher rule. To undeceive such persons, and to strip them of such false and delusive pleas, it is necessary to convince them that the course of this world is downward and wicked, and that their conformity to it should alarm rather than satisfy them. The doctrine of universal total depravity, is therefore conducive to true repentance.

We do not truly repent of an offence to a fellow-man, and sincerely ask pardon, unless we believe that he has just cause to be offended. If his displeasure has arisen from mere mistake, we expect to appease him by giving such information as will correct his mistake. If he has become displeased through mere captiousness, we may justify ourselves before him, and convict him of the wrong. In order to the exercise of genuine repentance towards God, we must know that he has a right to be displeased with us, that he has made no mistake in the matter, and that every attempt of ours to convict him of wrong in the case, will be abortive. To impress

all this deeply on our minds, it is only necessary we should be fully convinced that we are under just condemnation from God, and that all our pleas in self-justification are without foundation.

Good men have been accustomed to draw motives to penitence from the doctrines that have been mentioned. David humbled himself before God, with a confession of his natural depravity. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."[1] He viewed his sin with the greater abhorrence, as he saw and confessed the justice of the condemnation which it received from his Judge. "That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."[2]

True penitence is rendered more deep and pungent by a view of the wretchedness and helplessness which sin has brought upon us. So Paul exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[3]

CHAPTER I.

ORIGINAL STATE OF MAN.

THE FIRST MAN AND WOMAN WERE CREATED HOLY, AND, FOR A TIME, SERVED THEIR CREATOR ACCEPTABLY.[4]

How long the first pair continued in their original state of innocence and happiness we have no means of knowing; but that they did so continue for a time, is apparent on the face of the sacred record. A free intercourse with their Maker existed, and the token of the divine favor, the fruit of the tree of life, was not denied until a period arrived, distinctly marked in their history, when they first violated the covenant of their God.

The fact that the first pair continued, for a time, to serve God acceptably, proves that their Creator had endowed them with the powers necessary for this service. The possession of these endowments is implied in the phrase, "God created man in his own

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[1] Ps. li. 5.
[2] Ps. li. 4.
[3] Rom. vii. 24.
[4] Gen. i. 27, 31; Ecc. vii. 29.

image."[1] To interpret this as referring to the form of the human body, is wholly inconsistent with the spirituality of God. It is true, that God was afterwards manifested in human form; but the Scriptures represent the Son of God, in his assumption of our nature, as "made like his brethren," and, therefore, to suppose his human body to have been the pattern after which the body of Adam was formed, would change the order presented in the divine word. The phrase, "image of God," as explained by Paul,[2] includes "knowledge, righteousness and true holiness." It, therefore, refers to their mental endowments, by which they were fitted for the service of God.

Intelligence was necessary to render the service to God for which man was designed. A vast world had been created, abounding with creatures which exhibited, in their wonderful structure, the wisdom and power of their Creator, and, in the bountiful provision made for the supply of their wants, his goodness was richly displayed; but not one of all these creatures was capable of appreciating this wisdom, power, and goodness. They had eyes to see the light of the material sun; but, though the heavens declared the glory of God, and the earth was full of his goodness, to that glory and goodness all were totally blind. A creature was wanted capable of knowing God, and this knowledge our first parents possessed.

Something more than mere intellectual endowments was necessary to fit our first parents for acceptable service to God. These were possessed by the angels that had not kept their first estate, and yet they were enemies of God, and cast out from his presence. Purity of heart was needed; and, accordingly, Adam and Eve were endowed with righteousness and true holiness. They not only knew God, but they loved him supremely. Every natural desire which they possessed was duly subordinated to this reigning affection. Even their love to each other, pure and unalloyed, was far inferior to that which they both felt to him, who daily favored them with his visits, and taught them to see his glory in all his works by which they were surrounded.

We may interpret the phrase, "image of God," as including, also, the dominion with which man was invested over all inferior creatures. When representing man as the head of the woman,

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[1] Gen. i. 27. [2] Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24.

Paul speaks of him, in this relation, as "the image and glory of God."[1] This investiture of authority gives him a likeness to God, the Supreme Ruler. In the state of innocence, man possessed this authority without fear from any of the creatures. Until he had rebelled against his God, they were not permitted to rebel against him. As the appointed lord of the lower world, all creatures rendered him homage; and, as it were in their name, he stood, the priest in the grand temple, to offer up spiritual worship and service to the God of the whole creation. From every creature which Adam named he could learn something of God; and, with every new lesson, a new tribute of adoring praise was rendered to the Maker of all.

In the particulars which have been mentioned, the image of God is "renewed" in those who experience the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, and are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. The word "renewed" carries back our thoughts to man's original state. A new creation is effected by the Spirit, restoring the regenerate to the knowledge, righteousness, and holiness from which man has fallen. In their renewed state, the effects of the fall still appear, and will remain until the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed; but their connection with the second Adam secures the completion of the good work begun, and assures them that they shall ultimately bear the likeness of the heavenly, who is the image of God.

The human soul bears likeness to God, "the Father of spirits," in its spirituality and immortality. Also, the happiness which Adam and Eve enjoyed, while their innocence remained, was a rill from the fountain of blessedness, which is in the eternal God. In this happiness the image of God appeared, until it became sadly effaced by transgression. The spirituality and immortality of the soul remain, but the happiness of Eden has never revisited the earth; and it is again to be enjoyed only in the celestial paradise. Spirituality and immortality, without knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and communion with the blessed God, would constitute us immortal spirits in eternal woe.

We may profitably look back to the holy and happy state in which our first parents stood when they came from the hand of their

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 7.

Creator; and we may, with good effect, remember from whence we have fallen. A due contemplation of this subject will recommend to our acceptance the gracious plan of restoration which the gospel unfolds, in the person and work of the second Adam. What a Sabbath was that, when God, resting from the six days' work of creation, held communion with man, the last work of his hands; and when man, unstained by sin, poured forth the first offering of praise from the newly-created earth, free and acceptable to the Creator! Such a Sabbath the earth does not now know; but such a Sabbath remains to the people of God, and blessed are they who shall enter into this rest.

CHAPTER II.

THE FALL.

THE FIRST MAN, HAVING BEEN PLACED UNDER A COVENANT OF WORKS, VIOLATED IT, AND BROUGHT ITS PENALTY ON HIMSELF AND HIS DESCENDANTS.[1]

The narrative of the Fall, as given in the book of Genesis, is to be considered, not as a mythical representation, but as proper history. It is always so referred to in subsequent parts of the sacred volume; and its connection with other historical events is such as excludes the supposition, that it was anything else than simple fact.

The revelation of God's will to Adam, as recorded in the book of Genesis, is not there called a covenant; and some have doubted the propriety of using this term to denote it. If the word, in the Scripture use of it, signified, as it does in human transactions, a bargain made between equals, who are independent of each other, we might well reject the application of it to this subject. But in the sacred Scripture, it is used in a more extended signification. It denotes, 1. *An immutable ordinance.*[2] Under this sense may be included *an irrevocable will or testament.*[3] 2. *A sure and sta-*

[1] Gen. ii. 17; iii. 6, 16, 17, 18, 19; Rom. v. 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.
[2] Jer. xxxiii. 20. [3] Heb. ix. 15–17.

ble promise.[1] 3. *A precept.*[2] 4. *A mutual agreement.*[3] With this latitude of meaning, the word must be considered applicable in the present case; yet there would be no necessity to insist on its use, were it not that the Scriptures have used it in this application. See Hosea vi. 7, which may be more properly rendered than in the common version, "They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant." So the same Hebrew phrase may be understood in Job xxxi. 33; Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7.

As the term covenant is sometimes applied to a free promise, in which no condition is stipulated; it is proper to characterize that which was made with Adam as a covenant *of works.* It was a law, with a penalty affixed. "Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."[4] No promise was given, that Adam would continue to enjoy the divine favor if he continued obedient; but this may be understood to be clearly implied. Whether higher favor than he then enjoyed, would have been granted on condition of his persevering in obedience through a prescribed term of probation, we are not informed. We have reason to conclude, that a continuance in well-doing, would have received stronger marks of divine approbation according to its progress; and, from what we know of the power of habit, as tending to establish man in virtue or vice, (a tendency which it has, because God has so willed it) the conjecture is not improbable, that, had Adam persevered in his obedience, he would, after a time, have been confirmed in holiness. But, where the Scriptures are silent, we should not frame conjectures and make them articles of faith.

It is vain and sinful, to arraign God at the tribunal of our reason, for having prescribed such a test of obedience, as the eating of an apple. We may so far forget the reverence due to God, as to call in question the wisdom and goodness, of making so much ado about so little a matter; but in this we betray great impiety. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? It is enough that God has done it. God's acts are not little, when he creates the

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[1] Acts iii, 25; xxxiv. 10; Isaiah lix. 21.
[2] Ex. xxxiv. 28.
[3] Gen. xxxi. 44; xxvi. 28, 29; 1 Sam. xviii. 3.
Gen. ii. 16, 17.

minutest atom; and God's requirements are not to be contemned, when he gives one of the least of his commandments. The very simplicity of the thing, though human folly may scoff at it, may best agree with the wisdom of God. Had Adam made an attempt to dethrone his Maker, human reason would admit the magnitude of the crime; but no greater evil would have been inflicted on omnipotence by his puny effort, than when he ate the forbidden fruit. What difference, then, is there, in the magnitude of the crimes? None, in their effect; and none in their principle. To disobey, is, as far as the creature can go, to dethrone. Shall men mock God by permitting him to occupy the seat of universal authority, while they refuse obedience to that authority? Be not deceived; God is not mocked. He that disobeys God, rejects his reign; and so God views it. The test of obedience prescribed to Adam was easy; and this very fact makes the transgression the more inexcusable. It showed the greatness of Abraham's faith, that it stood so severe a test when he was required to offer up his son Isaac; and it proves the greatness of Adam's sin, that it was committed, when he might so easily have avoided it.

What kinds of fruit the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, bore, we have no means of knowing; and the knowledge, if we could attain to it, would do us no good. Some have asked, whether one fruit had a natural efficacy to produce immortality, and the other to produce death; but this also is an unprofitable question. Nature has no other efficacy than the will of God, and his appointment of these trees, for the use which it was his pleasure they should serve, was as efficacious as any law of nature.

The sacred narrative informs us that the garden of Eden, in which the innocent and happy pair were placed, abounded with trees, yielding all sorts of pleasant fruits. In the midst of the garden, were two trees distinguished from all the rest, and designed for special use. What that use was, may be inferred from their names. The tree of life, of which they were permitted to eat, secured to them immortality, or exemption from the penalty of the covenant. The tree of knowledge of good and evil, was designed for a different purpose; and its fruit was prohibited. Not to know good and evil, is a distinction ascribed to children.[1] Good and

[1] Deut. i. 39; Heb. v. 14.

evil, when spoken of in contrast, may refer to the moral quality of actions; but they are not restricted to this signification. When Job said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" he did not refer to the moral distinction between actions, but to enjoyment and suffering. When Barzillai declined to accompany David to Jerusalem, and live with him there, and assigned as a reason his inability to distinguish between good and evil; his reference was to enjoyment, not to moral quality.[1] Eve decided to eat of the forbidden fruit, because "she saw that it was *good*," not in a moral sense, but "for food." Children, who have not the knowledge of good and evil, are instructed by their parents, both what to do, and what to enjoy; and it is their duty and interest to follow the instructions received. The first human pair stood in the relation of children to their Creator; and, while they abstained from the forbidden fruit, they acknowledged their inability to know good and evil, and their dependence on the guidance of infinite wisdom. In abstaining, they acknowledged the prerogative of God, to decide for them what was good, and what was evil. The two trees were very significantly placed near to each other, and in the midst of the garden. The tree of life was the symbol of the divine favor; and the other tree, the symbol of the divine prerogative. The trees of the garden, generally, yielded fruit that was pleasant and life-sustaining; but the fruit of the tree of life was distinguished from the rest, as a special pledge of the divine favor. Yet the proximity of this tree to that which bore forbidden fruit, perpetually reminded the subjects of this probation, that the favor of God could be enjoyed only by respecting his prerogative. This token of the divine authority was in the midst of the garden; to remind them, that they held the privilege of eating all the pleasant fruits, by the grant of the Supreme Lord; and that their desire and enjoyment of natural good, was to be regulated by the decision of him, whose prerogative it was to know good and evil.

The departure of Eve from the straight line of duty is distinctly marked in the sacred narrative. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food,"[2] &c. When *she saw*. She judged for herself what was good. God's account of the transgression is:

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[1] 2 Sam. xix. 35.

[2] Gen. iii. 6.

"Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil;"[1] he has usurped our prerogative. This was the first transgression. The desire of natural good was made the rule of action. "When she saw," &c. The desire of natural good prevailed over reverence for the authority of God; and, in the transgression may be seen not only a desire of the pleasant fruit, but also a desire to be exempt from the necessity of referring to God's decision as the rule of conduct — "a tree to be desired to make one wise;"[2] to make one independent of God's wisdom. Such was the first transgression. It cast off the authority of God, usurped his prerogative, and gave the mind up to the dominion of natural desire.

Because of his violation of the covenant, man was excluded from the symbol of the divine favor. A cherub, with a flaming sword, was placed to guard the approach to the tree of life, lest he should eat thereof and live for ever. He had incurred the threatened penalty, and it began at once to be inflicted on him.

What was the precise import of *death*, as the penalty threatened to Adam, is a question of some difficulty. If it imported the death of the body, the threat was not executed at the time designated: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He did not literally die on the day of his transgression. Some have accounted for this by supposing that the mediation of Christ interposed, and prevented the execution of the threat. That God's purpose of mercy, through Christ, was kept in view in his dealings with Adam, we have no reason to doubt; but the Scriptures nowhere explain that it rescued man from the threatened penalty. If immediate literal death was the proper import of the threatened penalty, and if Adam was rescued from it by the mediation of Christ, he was delivered from a less evil to endure far greater. He was spared to live a life of depravity, and to die, if he died impenitent, under the wrath of God, and be doomed to eternal misery. If it be said that eternal misery would have followed his death had it taken place immediately, how can it be accounted for that this dreadful consequence of transgression was not intimated in the threatening? If it be said that the term death included this also, then the literal interpretation of it is abandoned, and its chief import is made to relate to another matter, of far greater magnitude

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[1] Gen. iii. 22. [2] Gen. iii. 6.

than the dissolution of the body. The Holy Spirit is the best expositor on this subject; and, after stating that death was introduced into the world by the sin of Adam,[1] sets this death in contrast with the eternal life procured by Christ: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."[2] As eternal life does not consist in exemption from literal death, so its opposite does not consist in the mere loss of life to the body.

We may understand that the threatened penalty was executed on Adam, in its proper import, when he was denied approach to the tree of life. This had been to him the symbol of the divine favor. What notion he had of death, as pertaining to the body, we know not; and he may never have been taught anything on this subject until he heard the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."[3] But Adam, besides having a body made of dust, had received from God "a living soul," which could not suffer dissolution. Some idea of this living principle, which distinguished him from the brutes around him, must have formed a part of that "knowledge" with which he was endowed, and in which the image of God in part consisted. What was death to his living soul? He knew, by happy experience, what it was to have the communion and favor of the living God; and to be cut off from these was the most dreadful death, and the only death of which the immortal spirit was capable. This penalty was inflicted in its awful import. The separation of the body from the soul, to which the name death is given, bears some likeness to the separation of the soul from God; and the dissolution of the body, whether by worms, or the funeral fire, leads the mind to the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, which are consequences of the second death. Of this full and most momentous import was the death of the soul. If Adam became a believer in Christ, he was delivered from under the penalty, and not merely prevented from falling under it. The dissolution of the body, which is the extension of the penalty to the material part of his constitution, he was not prevented from enduring; but from this, too, he will be redeemed at the resurrection.

The fallen pair were not only excluded from the tokens of God's

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[1] Rom. v. 12. [2] Rom. vi. 23. [3] Gen. iii. 19.

favor, but they began to suffer positive inflictions of his displeasure. They were banished from Eden, the home of their innocence and joy. Its pleasant shades, its beautiful flowers, its fragrant odors, its delicious fruits, they are compelled to leave for ever. The delightful employment of dressing and keeping the garden, which yielded sustenance without painful toil, was to be exchanged for hard labor in cultivating a cursed soil, yielding briers and thorns; and bread, hardly earned by the sweat of the face, was to be their food. On the woman, first in the transgression, a woe was denounced: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."[1] The first pain, thus intimated, became the model pain of exquisite suffering. These denunciations foretold a sad future. Stung with remorse, harassed with fears, God offended, and their souls undone, they bade farewell to their late blissful abode, and became wanderers on the earth, until their bodies, sinking under the weight of the ills inflicted, should crumble into dust. What other evils were included in that dreadful penalty, death; what the full import of the word, they and their posterity were to learn by woeful experience.

CHAPTER III.

MAN'S PRESENT STATE.

THE evils consequent on the disobedience of our first parents were not confined to them personally, but have fallen on their descendants also. Adam had been created in the image of God; but when that image had been lost by transgression, he begat a son in his own likeness.[2] So all his descendants since have borne the image of the earthly, fallen progenitor, and have been like him, not only in character, but in condition. The subject will be examined further in the following sections.

SECTION I.—ACTUAL SIN.

MEN OF ALL AGES AND NATIONS HAVE, IN THEIR ACTIONS, VIOLATED THE LAW OF GOD.[3]

The sacred volume, in describing the state of the world before

[1] Gen. iii. 16. [2] Gen. v. 3. [3] Rom. iii. 9–19; 1 John v. 19; Eph. ii. 2, 3.

the flood, says that "the earth was filled with violence."[1] The history of the period before the flood is very brief; yet we find, in the beginning of it, the murder of Abel by his brother;[2] in the progress of it, the bigamy of Lamech,[3] and the murder which he confessed to his wives; and, in the close of it, this account of the complete corruption of the earth, and the general prevalence of violence. The flood was sent in wrath for the transgressions of men; but its waters did not cleanse the earth from sin. Iniquities prevailed after the flood, as they had done before; and the condition of mankind, in all nations, was such as Paul has described in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. The children of Abraham were separated from the rest of mankind, and made a peculiar people to God; but, notwithstanding the religious advantages which they enjoyed, their history is little else than a record of rebellions against God, and judgments inflicted on them for their provocations. So common is wickedness in the earth, that it is called "the course of this world,"[4] and it is said, "the whole world lieth in wickedness."[5]

From this universal corruption no man is exempt. "There is no man which sinneth not."[6] All whom the Spirit of God brings to a knowledge of themselves confess, "In many things we offend all;"[7] and they pray, "Forgive us our sins."[8] If others make no confessions of sin, and no petitions for pardon, it is because of the blindness and hardness of their hearts.

He who looks into the state of society around him, finds proof of man's wickedness. Crimes abound everywhere; and the earth is filled with violence, as it was of old. Laws restrain the crimes and violence of men; but the very necessity of laws demonstrates the wickedness of mankind. War and oppression make up, in great measure, the history of our race; and innumerable deeds of wickedness, which never find a place in the historic record, are written in God's book of remembrance, and will be brought to light in that day, when men shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

The actual transgressions of men consist in doing what God has forbidden, and in leaving undone what he has commanded. The

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[1] Gen. vi. 11. [2] Gen. iv. 8. [3] Gen. iv. 19–23.
[4] Eph. ii. 2. [5] 1 John v. 19. [6] 2 Ch. vi. 36.
[7] James iii. 2 [8] Luke xi. 4.

latter are called sins of omission; the former, sins of commission. With both these kinds of transgression all men are more or less chargeable. They who abstain from grosser crimes have, nevertheless, committed many sins, and omitted many duties. But sin, in the overt act, constitutes only a very small part of man's sinfulness, as will appear in the next section.

Section II.—DEPRAVITY.

All men are by nature totally depraved.[1]

The depravity which we have to lament in mankind, respects their principles of action as moral beings. As merely sentient beings, external objects produce on them the proper effects; and, as rational beings, they draw conclusions in science with correctness. The disease and debility which are the consequence of moral evil, may impair both sense and reason; but we cannot affirm of these powers that they are totally depraved. Moral depravity shows itself in outward acts of transgression; but, atrocious as these often are, it is chiefly in the heart that God beholds and hates it. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."[2] In the heart it was that God saw the great wickedness of the earth. The heart is a metaphorical term, denoting those mental affections which are the principles or beginnings of action. Here depravity exists at the very fountain from which all human action flows.

The depravity of man is total. We do not mean by this that his conduct is as bad as it could be, or that no amiable affections have a place in his heart. The young man who addressed our Redeemer with most respectful inquiry how to attain eternal life, appears to have been unconverted, yet he possessed so amiable qualities that it is recorded, "Jesus, beholding him, loved him."[3] The goodness of God is great, even to the unthankful and evil; and he has been pleased to implant natural affections in hearts which desire not to retain him in their knowledge, and so to balance the propensities, even where there is no holiness, that life and human society have

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[1] Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21; Ps. xiv. 2, 3; li. 5; Rom. i. 21–25; iii. 9–23; vi. 17, viii. 5, 6, 7, 8; Eph. ii. 1; 1 John v. 19.

[2] Gen. vi. 5.

[3] Mark x. 21.

many enjoyments. When our first parents permitted natural desire to prevail over the authority of God, human depravity began to flow, and what it was at the fountain-head, it has been in all the streams that have spread through the earth. Men seek good at their own choice, and walk in their own ways, regardless of the authority of God. The love of God is dethroned from the heart, and therefore the grand principle of morality is wanting, and no true morality exists. A total absence of that by which the actions should be controlled and directed, is total depravity. Hence the strong language of Scripture, already quoted, is properly descriptive of human nature in its fallen state: "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Human depravity is universal. In heathen nations, men did not delight to retain God in their knowledge, and their very religion became filled with abominable rites. In lands blessed with the light of revelation, men love darkness rather than light, and give melancholy proof that they have not the love of God in them. The rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the young and the old, all give evidence that, to serve and please God, is not their chief delight, their meat and their drink. A few, converted by divine grace, differ from the rest of mankind, and esteem it their pleasure and honor to obey God; but these very men testify that it is God who has made them to differ, and that, in themselves, they are like other men. "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."[1] "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."[2]

Depravity is natural to man; it is born with him, and not acquired in the progress of life. It is not to be ascribed to evil habit, or evil example. Evil habits are formed by evil doing; and evil doing would not be, if there were no evil propensity. Evil example would not everywhere exist, if human nature were not everywhere corrupt; and the tendency to follow evil example would not be so common, and so much to be guarded against, if it were not natural to man. The Scriptures clearly teach this doctrine. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."[3] The psalmist did not mean to charge his

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[1] Cor. vi. 11. [2] Rom. vii. 18. [3] Ps. li. 5

mother with crime in these his humble confessions, but manifestly designs them to be an acknowledgment that his depravity was inwoven in his nature, and bore date from the very origin of his being. The Saviour taught, that which is born of the flesh, is flesh.[1] The term flesh, which is here opposed to spirit, signifies, as it does in other places, our depraved nature. It traces human depravity up to our very birth.

As every individual of our race is born of depraved parents, and brings depravity with him into the world, we are led to conceive of it as propagated from parent to child. This accords with the representations of Scripture: "Adam begat a son in his own likeness."[2] It accords also with analogies to which we are familiar. Plants and animals propagate their like; diseases are often hereditary, and the peculiarities of temper and mind by which parents were distinguished, often appear in their children. In our proneness to find fault with God's arrangements, we ask, why was the fallen nature of Adam propagated, rather than the original nature which he received from the hand of God. But we might as well complain that the ascent from the state of sin to that of innocence, is not as easy as the descent was found to be. Virtue fits the creatures of God for society, and for its most beautiful exhibitions opportunity is presented in the social relations. All these give one creature an influence over another, according to the character of the relation between them. Even angels, who were created independent of each other, had an influence on each other, so that the chief apostate in the great rebellion led followers after him. When man was created, it appeared good, in the view of Infinite Wisdom, to institute closer social relations than subsisted among angels. From these resulted a more extended influence than was known in the angelic ranks. Now, if Adam had transmitted his original nature, as created by God, the effect would have been the same as if the son had been immediately created by the divine hand, and the peculiarity designed to distinguish the human race would have been virtually abolished.

Another complaint which sometimes rises in our murmuring minds is, that pious men do not propagate their piety, but their natural depravity. We might as well complain that men of great

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[1] John iii. 6. [2] Gen. v. 3.

scientific attainments do not transmit their knowledge to their children as a natural inheritance. This complaint would have even greater appearance of propriety, for their attainments are, in a sense, their own; but whatever of holiness is found in man, is not a natural endowment or attainment, but a special gift of divine grace.

When we have discovered that the propagation of depravity in the human race accords with analogies found in nature, our minds seem to obtain relief; but, in reality, the matter has not been explained. Nature is not some superior rule to which God was compelled to conform, but it is an institution of his own, and cannot be right in the whole, if its parts are not right. If the propagation of human depravity is not in itself right, all the analogies of nature could not make it so. The true benefit of tracing these analogies is, that we may perceive all the arrangements to be from the same divine mind, and may the more reverently bow our judgment to the decision of Infinite Wisdom, and hush our murmurs into the more profound silence.

Our natural inquisitiveness takes occasion from this subject to indulge in unprofitable speculations. As the depravity which is propagated belongs more properly to the soul than to the material frame, we ask whether the soul is propagated. Some have preferred to consider the soul as a production immediately proceeding from the creating power of God. They suppose this to be intended when the Scriptures say, that he formeth the spirit of man within him.[1] They regard the body as all that is propagated, and suppose the Creator to form a spirit within it, as he breathed the spirit of life into the inanimate body of Adam, when he became a living soul. They view propagation as belonging to the material part of our nature, and consider it impossible, in the nature of things, that this should generate an immaterial spirit. The latter argument, which is merely philosophical, has to struggle with the fact that all animals generate something more than mere matter, in the powers with which they are endowed, and which bear a strong resemblance, in many respects, to the mental endowments of man. The preceding argument, from Scripture, fails in this, that God is equally said to form the body of the child in the womb of the

[1] Zech. xii. 1.

mother,[1] and yet we never regard that body as a production of immediate creation. It is true that the body of Adam was lifeless for a time; but it was not, as lifeless, that he begat a son in his likeness. We would not argue, from this case, that all life, whether in plants or animals, is a production of immediate creation, and not of propagation; and it does not appear that a more valid argument can be deduced from it, to prove the immediate creation of every human soul. After all, what does the question amount to? If the preservation of all things is strictly a perpetual creation, the distinction is wholly annihilated; for the soul is, at the first moment of its being, and at every subsequent moment throughout its whole existence, an immediate creation. But if this view be not admitted, it is still true that preservation is as dependent on the efficacious will of God, as creation. God willed that the soul of Adam should exist, and it came into being; this we call creation. God willed that Adam should propagate a son, and that this son should, like the father, have both a soul and a body. The progeny came into being according to the will of God. This work differs from the former, in that it is not singular, but conforms to what we call a law of nature; but nature's laws have no efficacy in themselves; and when we attribute the work to the efficacious will of God, it is a mere question of classification, whether we refer it to creation or Providence.

An objection to the doctrine of natural depravity is founded on the fact, that Jesus referred to little children, as examples for his disciples. This fact, however, will not authorize the inference, that little children are not depraved. The same teacher said to his disciples, "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."[2] As something may exist, proper to be imitated in animals which have no moral character, and even in serpents, notwithstanding their venom, so, something for imitation could be pointed out in children, notwithstanding their depravity. Another objection is drawn from the statement of Scripture, concerning children that had not done either good or evil.[3] But the doctrine does not affirm that all have committed overt acts of transgression. It refers to the first spring of action in the heart; and a fountain may be corrupt, before it has sent forth streams, as truly as after-

[1] Job xxxi. 15; Is. xliv. 2. [2] Matt. x. 16. [3] Rom. ix. 11.

wards. No objection, worthy of consideration, can be drawn from Paul's statement, that the children of the Corinthian Christians were holy;[1] for this manifestly relates to their fitness for familiar intercourse.

Vain it will be, to receive the doctrine of human depravity into our creed, if it is not received into our hearts. A thorough conviction of our total depravity is necessary to humble us before God, and drive us to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. No genuine Christian experience can exist, where this is not felt and operative.

Section III.—CONDEMNATION.

ALL MEN ARE BORN UNDER THE JUST CONDEMNATION OF GOD.[2]

The depravity of mankind unfits them for the favor and enjoyment of God; and that separation from him, in which the death of the soul consists, would be the necessary result, even if no declaration to that effect were made by the Supreme Judge. But this sentence has been declared. The voice of *Providence* loudly declares it. The pain with which our first breath is drawn; the sickness and suffering which attend on the cradle; the sorrows and toils of our best years; the infirmities of age; and lastly death, which, if it does not terminate our course earlier, after threatening us at every step, and keeping us all our life-time in bondage, finally triumphs over us; all these proclaim, in language not to be misunderstood, that we are under the displeasure of God. The curse of God rests on the very ground that we tread; and his wrath is poured out on our race in the wars, famines, and pestilence, with which the nations are often visited. The sentence is pronounced by the voice of *conscience* within us, which is to us as the voice of God; "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."[3] God speaks in *his holy word*, proclaiming the sentence; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."[4] "What things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become

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[1] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

[2] Ps. vii. 11; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36; Rom. i. 18; ii. 5, 6; iii. 19; v. 12–21.

[3] 1 John iii. 20.

[4] Gal. iii. 10.

guilty before God."[1] The view which is here presented of man's condition, relates not merely to his transgressions, but to his natural state. Hence it is said, "And were by nature, the children of wrath."[2]

These manifestations of God's displeasure are of early date, commencing with the first woes of mankind. They may be traced to the first sentence pronounced on our guilty parents, when they were expelled from Eden. Paul has explained, that we were all included in this sentence, and this is the proper date of our condemnation. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation."[3] *From* that hour, the descendants of Adam, their habitation, their employments, and their enjoyments, have all been under the curse. Blessings have, indeed, been poured out in rich profusion on our guilty race; but our very basket and store have been cursed, and the cup of mercies has been mingled with bitterness. The forbearance and long-suffering of God are manifested; but the hand of his wrath is uplifted.

The condemnation under which we are born is just. It is God's sentence; and all his judgments are righteous. It is not unusual for those who are condemned by human laws, to complain of their sentence; and we show our want of reconciliation to the justice of God, by our hard thoughts of God, when we either suffer or fear his displeasure against us.

Our rebellious hearts deny the justice of our condemnation, on the ground that God made us, and not we ourselves. If he did not create our souls directly with depraved propensities, he brought them into being, in circumstances which made their depravity certain. He gave us existence at his own pleasure; and over the circumstances of our origin we had no manner of control. It is therefore unjust, says the carnal heart, to condemn and punish us, for the sinful propensities which we bring with us into the world, or for the sinful deeds which naturally and necessarily proceed from them. In this manner, we are prone to transfer the blame of our iniquities from ourselves to our Maker. So did Adam; "The woman whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat,"[4] and so do all his descendants. Every one is probably conscious that such reasonings have at some time had a

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[1] Rom. iii. 19. [2] Eph. ii. 3. [3] Rom. v. 18. [4] Gen. iii 12.

place in his mind; and that it is difficult to exclude them wholly. On this account, they need a full and sober examination.

A consideration which ought to silence our accusing thoughts of God, is, that however much we may condemn him, we do not thereby acquit ourselves. If we admit that Adam would not have eaten the forbidden fruit had not God given him a wife; and if we even admit that God was to blame for giving him a wife who might become his tempter: still this does not exculpate Adam. His wife was certainly to blame for tempting him; and yet the guilt of his transgression is not the less on that account. Every agent is responsible for himself. Distributive justice, which gives to every man his due, has no other rule, and can have no other. Human courts do not excuse culprits, because of the corrupting influences which have led them to violate the law. The law takes direct cognizance of the agent and his deed. This accords with the common sense of mankind. So divine justice condemns the wicked man, and cannot do otherwise than condemn him, however he may have become wicked, and whoever else may be to blame for his being so. This principle we should hold fast in all our reasonings on that subject.

A difficulty in holding fast the principle just laid down, and applying it steadily to the case, arises from the circumstance that the Judge by whom we are condemned is also our Creator. To free our thoughts from embarrassment on this account, let us suppose the case were otherwise. Let us imagine that, after "the Sons of God had shouted for joy," at seeing the foundations of the earth laid, and its finished surface covered with verdure and beauty, the Most High was pleased to appoint one of this joyful choir to the honorable service of populating this new world, and to confer on him creative power for this purpose. Let us imagine that, just as this chosen agent was proceeding to execute his commission, he conceived the thought of making himself the god of the world he was about to people; and, for this purpose, filled it with unholy inhabitants, willing to join him in rebellion against the Supreme Ruler. This case, though merely imaginary, will serve to test the principle under consideration; and the question which it presents for adjudication, is, how, according to the rule of eternal and immutable justice, ought this world of rebels to be treated.

Perhaps it will be said, that the agent who abused the creative

power conferred on him ought to be punished, and that the creatures that he had brought into being ought to be annihilated. But this is not the plea which is set up for the human race. The plea which the sons of Adam present before the Judge of the earth, is, not that we ought to be annihilated, but that we ought not to be condemned and punished; this new order of creatures might object to annihilation, and think themselves as much entitled to life and impunity as we do. They might say, that annihilation is only a scheme to get the question out of court, and to free the Judge from difficulty; but they might insist on right, and claim, as they were created immortal by the commission granted to him by whom they were made, they have a right to immortality; and that this immortality, since their depravity is natural to them, ought to be free from all punishment. Now, the Judge might, for wise reasons, not chose to evade the responsibility of adjudicating the case; What, then, would the righteous sentence be? Even to annihilate them against their will, would be a punishment; that ought not to be inflicted, if the plea not guilty, because depravity is natural, can be sustained. The plea before an earthly judge would not stand a moment. Who could bear that a criminal should be acquitted and turned loose on the community, because he was born wicked, had grown up wicked, and it was as natural for him to commit theft, murder, and all manner of crimes, as it was to breathe? Such a plea, which the justice of men will not admit, the justice of God will not admit. The new order of creatures must be treated as they deserve; and Infinite Wisdom, instead of annihilating them, must adopt some other expedient, to counteract the diabolical intentions of the agent that created them.

The case which has been supposed is not so wholly imaginary as at first view it may have appeared. Though it is not true that an angel of light was commissioned to create a population for the earth, something else was done which, for all the purposes of the present discussion, amounts to the same. Adam and Eve, while yet in innocence, were commissioned to procreate a race of immortals, that should people the new world. This power, Satan, ambitious of divine honor, availed himself of to make himself the god of the world. By temptation he gained over the first pair to his design; and so completely is the procreating power with which they were invested, turned to his account, that the offspring of it are

called the "children of the devil."[1] So complete is his control of them, that he is called "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience,"[2] and they "are taken captive by him at his will;"[3] and the death which comes on them for disobedience is attributed to his power: "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."[4] The imaginary case, therefore, is substantially our own; and, if rebellion against God, subserviency to Satan, and confederacy with him to overthrow the government of the King Eternal, cannot be justified at the tribunal of divine justice, we are verily guilty, and justly condemned.

But our accusing thoughts of God are suppressed with difficulty. We have seen that the whole world is guilty before him; and yet every mouth is not stopped. We still entertain hard thoughts, and vent hard words against him; and the thing formed says to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?[5] Of such impiety it becomes us to beware. We should feel that our depravity is our own, however we came by it; that it renders us wholly unfit for the society and enjoyments of the holy place where God dwells, and for his favor, service, and communion; and that it ought to be loathsome in our own view, and must be so in the view of the holy God. If our own hearts condemn it, we shall be ready to admit, without complaint, that God also condemns it. And what can we say against God in the matter? What wrong has he done? His distributive justice does no wrong in treating the unholy according to their character. If he has done any wrong, it must relate to the department of public justice, which, as formerly explained, seeks the greatest good, and is the same as universal benevolence. Now, who will say that God's plan will not produce the greatest good? Who is wiser and better than God, to teach him a preferable way? When Satan gained his conquest over our first parents, God could have confined him at once in the pit, and inflicted on him the full torment yet in store for him; and he might have annihilated the whole race of man in the original pair. This would have terminated the difficulty by an act of power; but who will affirm that it would have been wisest or best? God would have appeared disappointed and defeated. Distributive justice would have ap-

[1] 1 John iii. 10; John viii. 44. [2] Eph. ii. 2. [3] 2 Tim. ii. 26.
[4] Heb. ii. 14. [5] Rom. ix. 20.

peared relieved rather than developed. Satan triumphed by artifice, and God has chosen to defeat him by the counsel of his wisdom. Satan exalted himself to dominion over the world; God chose to overcome him, not by power, but by humiliation. Satan gained his success by means of the first Adam; God, in the second Adam, bruised the serpent's head. Satan, by his success, gained the power of death; God, by death, the death of Jesus Christ, has destroyed him and his power.[1] Who will dare affirm that God's way is not best? It becomes us to feel assured, whatever darkness may yet remain on this subject, that God would not have given up his Son to free us from condemnation, if that condemnation had not been just; and that he would not have made so great a gift, so costly a sacrifice, if the scheme had not been worthy of his infinite wisdom; or if some other, by which the sacrifice might have been spared, would have been preferable.

When the question has been settled, and the principle established, that men may be held responsible for their own sins, without inquiring how they became sinners, a difficulty still remains as to the date of the condemnation under which we all lie, and the ground of the original sentence. When the mind becomes perplexed with subtle reasonings, it is well to keep facts steadily in view, and to hold fast the plain testimony of inspired truth. It is expressly said, in the unerring word, "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" and again, "The judgment was by one [offence] to condemnation."[2] It is here clearly taught that one judgment, one sentence, included all men, and that this judgment was made up and the sentence pronounced on one offence of one man. With this express teaching of Scripture facts agree. The indications of God's displeasure against the race are not postponed until each individual has been born into the world. Every mother is not carried back to Eden before she brings forth a son, that he may, in his own person, receive the sentence of condemnation, be denied access to the tree of life, driven from the garden of delights, and doomed to sorrow, toil, and death. Whatever our reasonings may say on the subject, it is fully ascertained to be the will of God, before an individual is born into the world, that, when born, he shall be in the condition in which the curse left the father

[1] Heb. ii. 14.

[2] Rom. v. 16, 18.

of the race. The Bible, and the voice of Nature, speak alike on this point; and if our reasonings say that the Author of Nature and the Bible has done wrong, we should suspect that we have erred in our inferences, or in the premises from which they are drawn. And if it could be shown that a separate sentence is pronounced on each individual as he comes into the world, his condition would be no better. Being depraved by nature, we are "by nature children of wrath."[1] Wrath is still our inheritance; and if the antiquity of the sentence which appointed it be admitted, the measure of that wrath is not thereby increased, nor the endurance of it made earlier. As to these results, the question is one of no importance whatever. Its relation, as exhibited in Scripture, to the doctrine of justification by the obedience of Christ, constitutes its chief claim to our careful consideration.

The sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," was pronounced on Adam in the singular number; yet he appears to stand under this sentence as the representative of his descendants, on all of whom the sentence takes effect. So Eve was addressed in the singular number, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children;" but she stood, in this sentence, as the representative of all her daughters, on whom this penalty falls. As the natural parents, Adam and Eve stood together as the head of the race; but there was a peculiar sense in which that headship pertained to Adam. Though Eve was first in the transgression, it is not said by one woman, but "by one man sin entered into the world." The judgment was not by the two offences of the two natural parents of the race, but by the one offence of the one man; the previous offence of the woman being left out of the account. In this headship Adam is contrasted with Christ, being called "the figure of him that was to come."[2] This comparison is further brought to view in 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47, where Christ is called the second Adam; and in verse 22, where it is said, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." On Adam, who was first formed, the responsibility of peopling the new world with a race of holy immortals specially rested; and, though Satan artfully directed his first assault against the woman, his scheme would have failed had not Adam been gained over to his interest. This divinely ap-

[1] Eph. ii. 3.

[2] Rom. v. 14.

pointed headship of Adam made his disobedience the turning point on which the future condition of his posterity depended; and Paul takes occasion from this to illustrate the dependence of believers on the obedience of the second Adam, for justification and life.

To this view it is objected, that, according to the principles of justice, the guilt of one man cannot be transferred to another, and no man can be justly condemned for that of which it is impossible for him to repent. No man living can repent of Adam's sin, and the guilt of Adam's sin cannot justly be imputed to any other person.

What are here so confidently assumed as axioms, may well be called in question. We must believe the Scriptures, when they say, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."[1] "He bore our sin in his own body on the tree."[2] And we know that men cannot repent of deeds which they have wholly forgotten, and yet they are responsible for them. But there is a much shorter way of getting at this question, than by a tedious examination of these assumed axioms. No man understands that the guilt of Adam was transferred. It still remained his, and was closely and inseparably bound about him. But every one knows that there may be union and confederacy in crime. In commercial affairs, if twenty men owe one hundred dollars, each may pay five dollars, and the obligation of the whole will be cancelled. But in morals, if twenty subjects confederate to assassinate their king, each one is guilty of the whole crime, because each one has the full intention of it. Only one of the band may plunge the dagger to the monarch's heart; but his crime may be justly imputed to them all, though his guilt may not be transferred to another. Now, we may inquire, whether such union does not exist between Adam and his descendants, as justifies the imputation of his sin to them; or, in other words, shows it to be in accordance with justice. Paul, in comparing Adam and Christ as public heads, has, in the fifth chapter of Romans, pointed out disagreements as well as agreements. Death comes from the disobedience of the one; and life from the obedience of the other; and in Rom. vi. 23, he teaches that there is an important difference as to the mode in which these results follow. Death is wages, a thing deserved; life is a gift. The

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[1] Is. liii. 6. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 24.

benefits of righteousness and life, received from Christ, are by faith; and "It is of faith, that it might be by grace."[1] The condemnation and death which are from Adam, are not gratuitous and arbitrary, but come on us justly. We inquire, then, whether there is such a connection between Adam and his descendants, as renders the imputation of his sin to them, an act of justice.

1. There is a moral union between Adam and his descendants. His disobedience unfurled the banner of rebellion, and we all rally around it. We approve the deed of our father, and take arms in maintaining the war against heaven, which his disobedience proclaimed. He is the chief in this conspiracy of treason, but we are all accessories. As to the outward act, the eating of the forbidden fruit, we did not commit it; but, regarding it as a declaration of independence and revolt, we have made it our own, and it may be as justly set to our account, as if we had personally committed the deed. In this view, if we cannot, strictly speaking, repent of Adam's sin, we may most cordially disapprove the whole revolt from God, in which our race is engaged; may most bitterly regret that it was ever commenced; and may take guilt and shame to ourselves in deep humiliation before God, that we have been engaged in it. With such feelings pervading our hearts, the doctrine that Adam's sin is imputed to us, will not be rejected as inconsistent with justice. If we cannot, strictly speaking, repent of it, we may at least take the guilt of it to ourselves, in a sense which perfectly accords with the feelings of true penitence; and when the Holy Spirit has taught us to impute it to ourselves, we shall not complain that God imputes it.

2. There is a natural union between Adam and his descendants. He is their natural parent; and, because of this relation, they inherit a depraved nature. Our moral union with him renders our condemnation just, from the moment we possess separate existence, because of our personal depravity; and our natural union with him rendered it proper, that our condemnation should be included in the general sentence.

3. There is a federal union between Adam and his descendants. We have before seen that a covenant, not in the common, but the Scripture sense of the term, was made with Adam. This covenant,

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[1] Rom. iv. 16.

this arrangement or constitution of things, made the future character and condition of his descendants dependent on his obedience. He was, in this respect, their federal head. Some maintain that the covenant with Adam was the covenant of nature, and that there was no federal headship, different from the natural headship which belonged to him as the first parent. Happily for us, a decision of this question is not indispensable to our present discussion. The natural and moral union which we have already considered, is a just ground for the divine sentence against the whole race, in the person of their first parent; but a further examination of this question may be conducive to a better understanding of the subject.

Since nature is not something different from God operating, it cannot be of much importance to determine how much of the transaction with Adam was natural, and how much beyond the proper province of nature. The revelation of God's will in the garden was as much above nature, as the subsequent revelation from Sinai; and so also was the judgment pronounced after the transgression. But the including of children with their parents, in the penalty inflicted for the sins of their parents, is seen in the providence of God, both in ordinary and extraordinary dispensations. Every one knows that poverty and suffering are brought on children by the intemperance and other crimes of their parents. The evils of war, famine, and pestilence, judgments inflicted for the sins of men, fall on children as well as their parents. In the deluge, and the burning of Sodom, children were destroyed with their parents. On this point, the word of God agrees with his providence. We are sometimes jealous for the Lord's reputation, and are afraid to speak of his visiting the sins of parents on their children, but we are more cautious than the Lord himself. He proclaimed from Sinai, with his own voice, and recorded in stone with his own finger, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."[1] And when he showed his glory to Moses, and proclaimed his name, instead of being jealous to conceal this fact, he was jealous rather to make it known: "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.[2]

God's solemn declarations on this point not only explain his

[1] Ex. xx. 5.

[2] Ex. xxxiv. 7.

providence, but, in the most impressive manner, exhibit the great responsibility of parents. To bring an immortal into being, and to form his character for time and eternity, is a responsibility most momentous. This responsibility devolves on men, and it is proper they should feel it. To awaken them to a sense of it, God addresses them in the solemn language which has been quoted.

While the Scriptures stir up parents to a sense of their responsibility, they leave to children no pretext with which to cover their iniquities. Some have said, "The Lord's ways are not equal. Our fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."[1] To these complainers God said, "Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die."[2] This is not a law repealing the decalogue, but is to be explained in harmony with it. The sins of parents affect both the character and the condition of their children, and for all this they are responsible; but the condition of the children is not worse than their character, and therefore the Lord's ways are equal, and their complaints against him groundless.

The case of Adam differed from that of all fathers since. These may transmit peculiar tempers and propensities, and may influence their children by instruction and example, but they cannot bring them into the world free from the depravity and condemnation which the transgression of Adam brings upon them. But, though the responsibility on Adam was greater, it is still true, as in the other cases, that his descendants are responsible for themselves, and not one of them will suffer beyond the demerit of his personal character. Such is the union between Adam and his descendants, that depravity and condemnation pass from him to them, not separately, but as one inheritance. His sin, for which they suffer, is their own as well as his, and it is imputed to them because it belongs to them — is justly theirs.

After all the explanations that have been made, it may be that our hearts still accuse God, and secretly say that, had we been in his stead, we would have dealt more kindly with the human race than he has done. These accusations of God, he hears; these

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[1] Ez. xviii. 2.

[2] Ezek. xviii. 4.

most secret whispers of the heart, he fully understands. What impiety does he see therein! That we, who know so little of his ways, should presume to be wiser or better than he, is daring impiety; and if nothing else will convince us that we deserve the wrath of God, let this impiety suffice. Let us accuse no more, but lay our hands on our mouths, and in deep silence before him, confess our guilt.

Section IV.—HELPLESSNESS.

Men are unable to save themselves.[1]

The inability of men to save themselves, respects both their condemnation and their depravity.

1. Men are unable to free themselves from condemnation.

The justice by which we are all condemned is immutable. It is an attribute in the nature of God, who is not only the first cause of all things, but the very standard of all perfection. When we inquire whether God's ways are right, we have only to ask whether they correspond with his own perfections, for there is no higher standard by which they may be tried. As the perfections of God are immutable, the standard of right is immutable. A change in the law by which we are condemned is therefore impossible. God has sometimes, from regard to the peculiar circumstances of some men, given special commands to them, which have not been obligatory on all; but the obligation to obey him, whatever his commands may be, is universal and perpetual, and no act of disobedience can ever be justified under his righteous government.

The sentence of condemnation has been duly pronounced. It was not a rash decision, needing to be revised. The Omniscient Judge knew well all the facts in the case, all the circumstances which may be pleaded in extenuation, all the effects of his decision on us, and all the bearings of it on his own character and government. His determination to create the world was not made with greater deliberation, or on surer ground; and we may as soon expect him to annihilate all the creatures that he has made, as to reverse the sentence by which we are condemned.

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[1] Jer. xiii. 23; John iii. 3; vi. 44; Rom. iii. 19, 20; viii. 7, 8; Gal. iii. 10; Heb. x. 4; xii. 14.

The Scriptures affirm, that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.[1] The law requires perfect and perpetual obedience, and can be satisfied with nothing less. Law is converted into mere advice, when its requirements are not obligatory. To claim the privilege of violating the law, or coming short of its requirements, is to claim, so far, exemption from its authority, and therefore from the moral government of God. Such exemption divine justice will not allow. Its language is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."[2] "What things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."[3] The view which is here presented of man's condition, relates not merely to his transgressions, but to his natural state. Hence it is said, "And were by nature the children of wrath."[4] So much has God the maintenance of his law at heart, that he who was in the bosom of the Father, and well understood all his counsels, has with solemnity assured us: "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be ful filled."[5]

There is a method of rescue from condemnation; but it is not one of man's devising or executing. To effect it required a display of wisdom, power and love, infinitely beyond the highest efforts of man. It is God's work, challenging the admiration of angels, and demanding gratitude, praise, and joyful acceptance from every human being.

2. Men are unable to free themselves from depravity.

The first element of this inability is seen in the fact that men lack the necessary disposition. By nature we love darkness rather than light, sin rather than holiness. To be free from depravity is to be holy, and no man can desire holiness or perfect conformity to the law of God, who does not delight in that law. But expe-perience and Scripture unite in teaching us that the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.[6] The cause of this exists in the fact, that the carnal mind is enmity

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[1] Rom. iii. 20 [2] Gal. iii. 10. [3] Rom. iii. 19. [4] Eph. ii. 3.
[5] Matt. v. 18. [6] Rom. viii. 7.

against God. Men love the ways of transgression, and desire not the knowledge of God's ways; and, therefore, they lack the disposition necessary to free themselves from depravity, and render themselves strictly conformed to the law of God.

Another element which renders the inability complete, is, that if men had the disposition, they have not the power. Men have the power to perform such external acts as the law of God requires of them. If they were wholly disposed to perform such acts, and failed through mere physical inability, that inability would be a valid excuse. God accepteth according to what a man hath.[1] We are commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together; but the man who is fastened to his bed by palsy is not required to meet in the house of God. Depravity does not consist in external acts, but belongs to the heart; and the affections of the heart are not subject to volition, as the motions of the limbs are. Hence the Apostle says, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would."[2] Every converted man knows the meaning of this language. The current of depraved affections in our hearts, which has been flowing in the wrong direction from the beginning of our being, and gathering strength by the power of habit, does not stop at our bidding. A volition cannot stop it with as much ease as when it moves a finger. If any man thinks he has the power to be holy at will, let him try it, and he will find his mistake.

The inability last described, which is usually called moral, must be distinguished carefully from that physical inability which excuses outward acts. Physical inability would prevent the action, even if the whole heart were bent on performing it. It excuses the failure to act; but it will not excuse a corrupt or a divided heart. The paralytic may be excused for not attending at the house of God; but he is not excused for preferring to be absent, or for possessing no longing for the courts of the Lord. The moral inability of men consists in having either a divided heart, or a heart fully set in them to do evil. The former every converted man laments, and blames himself for; and the latter is descriptive of unconverted or natural men. This includes the lack, both of disposition and power, and renders the inability complete. This inability is

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 12. [2] Gal. v. 17

not an excuse for the depravity, but is the depravity itself, in its full influence over all the powers of the soul.

The Scripture representations of men's inability are exceedingly strong. They are said to be without strength,[1] captives,[2] in bond age,[3] asleep,[4] dead,[5] &c. The act by which they are delivered from their natural state, is called regeneration, quickening or giving life, renewing, resurrection, translation, creation; and it is directly ascribed to the power of God, the power that called light out of darkness, and raised up Christ from the dead.

Our views concerning our character and condition by nature are wholly incorrect, if we imagine that a little work, which we can effect at pleasure, will set all right. Thousands postpone the concerns of the soul from this vain imagination. A true sense of our inability would drive us to him who is able to save.

CONCLUSION.

A careless admission that men are sinners is often made by persons who give themselves little concern about religion; and even acrimonious complaints may be freely vented by them against the iniquities of others. But such is the stupefying effect of human depravity, that men have very little complaint to make against themselves; and their condition, as sinners against God, awakens very little uneasiness. Occasionally conscience may be aroused, and produce alarm; but, through the deceitfulness of sin, its rebukes and warnings become unheeded, and men are again lulled to sleep in carnal security. Until this fatal slumber is broken, and a thorough, deep-rooted conviction of sin seizes the mind, and allows the man no quiet, his spiritual state exhibits no favorable indications.

Conviction of sin has sometimes produced very disquieting effects in the minds of heathen men, destitute of the true knowledge of God. Costly sacrifices and painful austerities have been resorted to for the purpose of appeasing their offended deities. Nature teaches men their danger, but cannot show them the way of escape. In these circumstances, how welcome is the light which the Bible

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[1] Rom. v. 6. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 26. [3] 2 Pet. ii. 19; Rom vi. 16, 17.
[4] 1 Thes. v. 6. [5] Eph. v. 14; Col. ii. 13.

throws on our path! It gives a far clearer discovery of our danger, and, at the same time, opens before us the door of hope.

Conviction of sin may at first respect merely our overt acts of wickedness; but, if thorough and effectual, it will extend to the depraved heart, from which evil actions proceed. It will open to our view this fountain of corruption, this deep sea casting up mire and dirt. To explore the deep windings of depravity, dark and filthy, we need the torch of revelation. Its use in making us acquainted with ourselves, demonstrates the divinity of its origin. The woman of Samaria said of Jesus, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"[1] And the Bible, which tells us so exactly all that is in our hearts, must be from God, the Searcher of hearts. The world of iniquity within us was formerly to us a land unknown; but we have now explored it in part, and we can testify that the only correct map of it is in the Holy Scriptures. As we make progress in the knowledge of ourselves, throughout our course of religious experience, what we read in our own hearts and what we read in the Bible agree perfectly, and we ever carry with us a proof that the doctrine of the Bible is the truth of God.

Many who profess to regard the Bible as a revelation from heaven, do not receive its doctrine concerning the present state of man. They cannot conceive the human heart to be so deceitful and desperately wicked as the Bible declares it to be; and especially they do not so conceive of their own hearts. We hence know that such men could not have written the Bible. When the light of truth has produced in us a thorough conviction of sin, we read the Bible with new eyes, and we discover in it the handwriting of him who said, "I the Lord search the heart."[2]

The exceeding sinfulness of sin appears when it is viewed as committed against God. David said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."[3] While under genuine conviction of sin, a view of God's perfections renders the conviction overwhelming. To have sinned against so glorious and excellent a being; to have rebelled against the rightful Sovereign of the universe, and aimed at dethroning him; to have violated his law, holy, just, and good; to

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[1] John iv. 29. [2] Jer. xvii. 10. [3] Ps. li. 4.

have trampled his authority under our feet, insulted his majesty, despised the riches of his forbearance and goodness; to have persevered in our course, notwithstanding the calls of his mercy; and, in spite of all his warnings and threatenings, to have, feeble worms as we are, defied his omnipotent vengeance: when such views of sin are presented, in the light of God's word, our souls are filled with anguish, and in the depth of sorrow and self-condemnation we adopt the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."[1]

The word of God, which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,[2] often gives pain by its probings, but their tendency is salutary. They are unwelcome to hypocrites and false professors; but the man of sincere piety prays, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me into the way everlasting."[3] The Bible tears the mask from the hypocrite, and shows to the Pharisee that all his righteousnesses are but filthy rags;[4] but, humiliating as these wholesome instructions are, the true penitent rejoices to receive them. He fears to be deceived; and he blesses God for the light of truth, by which his true character is revealed.

When men's eyes are opened to see their spiritual danger, they generally attempt, in their own strength, to work out their salvation. These efforts prove unavailing; and they learn, by experience, that they have no help in themselves. This truth, though clearly taught in the Bible, they never really believed until it was thus learned. Here arises, in the heart of Christian experience, another confirmation of Bible doctrine. A truth which no man sincerely believes until the Spirit of God has taught him, by inward experience, must have proceeded from God. In the whole progress of our spiritual life we become increasingly convinced of our utter helplessness and entire dependence on strength divine; and the Bible doctrine on this subject acquires perpetually increasing confirmation.

Genuine Christian experience commences with conviction of sin; but, blessed be God, it does not end here. The knowledge of our

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[1] Luke xviii. 13. [2] Heb. iv. 12. [3] Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. [4] Is. lxiv. 6.

depravity, condemnation, and helplessness, would fill us with despair, were it not that salvation, precisely adapted to our necessities, has been provided by the mercy of God, and revealed in the gospel of his Son. The very truth, which would otherwise fill us with anguish and despair, prepares for the joyful acceptance of salvation by Christ. He who rejects this truth does not feel the need of Christ; and, therefore, does not come to him for life. They that be whole need not a physician.[1] Let the truth of this chapter be received deep in the heart, and we shall be prepared for the profitable study of the next subject.

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[1] Matt. ix. 12.

BOOK FIFTH.

DOCTRINE CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.

INTRODUCTION.

DUTY OF BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST.[1]

In close connection with repentance for sin, the Word of God enjoins the duty of believing in Christ: "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel:[2] "Testifying repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."[3] Both the duties relate to men as sinners, and without the performance of them, escape from the penalty of sin is impossible. The requirement of faith, in addition to repentance, proves that mere sorrow for sin will not suffice; and the passages of Scripture are numerous in which faith is expressly declared to be necessary to salvation: "Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be damned."[4] "Without faith it is impossible to please him."[5] "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."[6] "He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotton Son of God."[7]

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[1] Acts xvi. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. John ix. 35. Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Who is he, that I might believe on him?

[2] Mark i. 15. [3] Acts xx. 21. [4] Mark xvi. 15, 16.

[5] Heb. xi. 6. [6] John iii. 36. [7] John iii. 18.

These clear proofs that faith is necessary to salvation, render it important to understand the nature of faith. And since the saving benefit does not result from every kind or exercise of faith, but only from faith in Christ, what it is to believe in Jesus Christ, is an inquiry of highest interest.

Every one who reflects on the operations of his own mind, will perceive that faith lies at the foundation of every mental affection, and of every purpose to act. The testimony of our senses must be believed, before external objects can awaken any emotion in the mind; and the uniformity of nature's laws, and the deductions of our reason, must be believed before we can resolve to shun a precipice, or to labor for a future crop. In the ordinary affairs of life, faith is the basis of action. The man who believes that his house is on fire, or that a rich treasure is buried under it, acts accordingly. It is equally true that faith lies at the foundation of every religious affection and of every religious duty. He who loves God, and delights in his will and works, must believe that he is, and that the will and works in which he delights are realities, and possess the qualities which his mind attributes to them. He who repents of sin, must believe that the sin of which he repents has been committed, and that it possesses the evil nature which he condemns and loathes. So, in everything else, faith is the foundation of all religion.

In the view which has been taken, faith is merely intellectual, and does not imply any emotion, either pleasurable or painful. It may immediately excite emotions, pleasurable or painful, according to the character of the truth believed, and the state of mind in which it is received. The belief of one truth gives pleasure; and another, pain; and the belief of the same truth may give pleasure to one mind and pain to another. So, the truth of God, which a man dislikes while he is unconverted, is delighted in after his heart has been changed.

Faith, in this general sense, is necessary to the obedience of holy creatures, and mingles with all the holy exercises of their minds. But holy beings are incapable of repentance, because they have no sin to repent of: and they are unable to approach to God through Christ as guilty beings, seeking pardon. The Gospel addresses men as sinners, and presents Christ to them as the

Saviour of sinners; and the faith in Christ which it requires, is the receiving of the truth which it declares concerning Christ.

Although faith may be contemplated as merely intellectual, and as antecedent to all emotion; it is not, in this abstract view of it, that faith in Christ is enjoined in the Gospel, and has the promise of salvation. Men must receive "the love of the truth, that they may be saved,"[1] as well as the truth itself. A merely intellectual faith, without the love of the truth believed, cannot produce the proper fruits of faith; for "faith worketh by love;"[2] and it cannot secure the blessings promised to faith; for "with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness."[3] A faith which dwells exclusively in the intellect, and leaves the heart untouched and cold, is the dead faith which the apostle James describes.[4]

Faith in Christ, is faith in the declarations of the Gospel concerning Christ; and it is faith in these as coming from God. It is the receiving of God's testimony concerning his Son; and, in this view of it, we see the great sinfulness of unbelief; for he who believeth not, hath made God a liar.[5] We see, also, how firm a foundation is laid for strong faith. The Gospel is the Word of God that cannot lie. Our senses may deceive us; and the deductions of our reason may be false. Relying on these, we may err, in things pertaining to the present life; but, in laying hold on life eternal, we may believe the truth of God with unwavering confidence. His word cannot fail.

Faith *in Christ* is necessary to salvation. We may believe many things that God has said in his Holy Word, without believing in Christ; and we may believe many truths concerning Christ, without possessing that faith in him which has the promise of eternal life. True faith receives Christ entire, as he is presented in the Gospel. If any part of his character, of his offices, or of his doctrine, is unwelcome to the heart, true faith does not dwell there. A perfect knowledge of Christ is not necessary to true faith: otherwise true faith would be impossible: for the riches of Christ are unsearchable,[6] and his love passeth knowledge.[7] But the true believer delights in Christ, just so far as he has knowledge

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[1] 2 Thess. ii. 10. [2] Gal. v. 6. [3] Rom. x. 10.
James ii. 26. [5] 1 John v. 10. [6] Eph. iii. 8.
[7] Eph. iii. 19.

of him; and desires to know more of him, that he may be more filled with his love. The revelation made to the Old Testament saints was obscure; but, so far as they could see Christ, in the light which was afforded them, they rejoiced to see his day and were glad.[1]

From the necessity of faith in Christ may be inferred the greatness of Christ's character. When Jesus said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,"[2] he claimed an importance to which Isaiah or Paul could never have aspired. When the ministers of his religion taught, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,"[3] they ascribed to him an office of exceeding greatness. If we believe in Christ, according to the Scriptures, we fully justify all that he claimed for himself, and all that his apostles claimed for him; and we rejoice to render to him all honor and praise.

We may consider the question proposed to us: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" On the decision of this question our eternal all depends. As guilty sinners we are under condemnation, and the wrath of God abides on us. Among all the beings in the universe, no deliverer can be found, except Jesus Christ, and there is no salvation possible, except by faith in him. It is, therefore, an inquiry of infinite importance whether we believe in him. The man, to whom the question was proposed by the Saviour, very pertinently asked in turn, "Who is he, that I might believe on him?" We are about to institute the inquiry, Who is he? While we search the Holy Scriptures, to find the answer, let us take heed to it that we believe in him with all our hearts. Let us rejoice to discover that he is mighty to save; and that he is, in every particular, just such a Saviour as we need. While we study his character and works, let us receive him into our hearts, and yield ourselves up to him, as bought with his blood, and seek to glorify him with our bodies and spirits, which are his.

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[1] John viii. 56. [2] John viii. 24. [3] Acts iv. 12.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

Section I.—HUMANITY.

Jesus Christ was a man.[1]

The manner of Christ's conception was peculiar. Without a human father, he was conceived in the womb of his virgin mother, by the power of the Holy Ghost. How far the son of Mary, conceived in this peculiar manner, resembled the sons born of other mothers, in the ordinary mode of generation, and how far he differed from them, we cannot certainly know from the circumstances of his conception. The divine power, which formed a man out of the dust of the ground, could also form a man in the womb of the virgin: but whether this extraordinary production should be a man, or a being of some other order, depended entirely on the will of God. For the knowledge of what Jesus Christ was, we are wholly indebted to the testimony concerning him given in the sacred Scriptures.

The testimony of the inspired Word on this point is very explicit. Whatever else Jesus Christ may have been, he was certainly a man; for so innumerable passages of Scripture declare. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved;"[2] "One mediator, the man Christ Jesus."[3]

Jesus Christ had a human body. His was not a mere shadowy form of humanity; for, even after his resurrection, he said to his disciples, "Handle me and see me, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."[4] It was a real body that bore the weight of the cross, and was afterwards nailed to it. It was a real body that was pierced by the spear; and real blood and water

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[1] John i. 14; Phil. ii. 7, 8; Heb. ii. 14–17; Mark ix. 12; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Matt. i. 18–25; Luke i. 28–35; Gal. iv. 4; Matt. iv. 2; xxi. 18; John iv. 6, 10; Matt. viii. 24; xxi. 18; Mark ix. 12; Isaiah liii. 3; John xi. 35; Luke xix. 41; Matt. xxvi. 37, 38; Luke xxii. 44; Matt. iv. 1; Mark i. 13; Luke iv. 2; Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15; Luke ii. 10, 52; Matt. iv. 11; Luke xxii. 43; Mark xv. 34.

[2] Acts ii. 22. [3] 1 Tim. ii. 5. [4] Luke xxiv. 39.

issued from the wound. It was a real body that was embalmed with spices and laid in the tomb; and that afterwards rose from the dead. This body was human. It had the appearance and organs common to human bodies; was sustained by food, was subject to hunger and weariness, and needed the rest of sleep, like the bodies of other men.

Jesus Christ had a human soul. If the divine nature had dwelt in his body as a mere tabernacle of flesh, and supplied to it the place of a human soul, it could not have been said that "Jesus increased in wisdom."[1] The mere material fabric could have no wisdom, and the wisdom of the divine nature was not susceptible of increase. Nor was it some created spirit of angelic or superangelic nature that animated his body. He was made in all things like his brethren;[2] and he would not have been a brother, one of the family, made like the rest, if the spirit that dwelt in his human flesh had not also been human. Without this he would not have been a man. If he had not possessed a soul, he could not have said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful;"[3] nor could it have been said, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."[4] And if his soul had not been human, it would not have been a suitable offering for the sin of human beings. He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.[5] He must be made like those whose law-place he assumed, and for whom he made himself a sacrifice.

The soul of Christ was unlike the souls of ordinary men, in being without the taint of sin. The mention of this exception proves more strongly the likeness in other respects. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[6] Had the divine nature served as the soul of Christ, a statement of this exception would have been needless and inappropriate. Christ could be a man without being depraved; for Adam was a man before he fell. In the comparison between Christ and Adam as public heads, Adam is called the first man, and Christ the second man.[7] The humanity of the latter is as real as that of the former.

In the working of miracles God has shown that he is able to

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[1] Luke ii. 52.
[2] Heb. ii. 17.
[3] Mark xiv. 34.
[4] Isaiah liii. 10.
[5] Heb. ii. 16.
[6] Heb. iv. 15.
[7] 1 Cor. xv. 47.

suspend the laws of nature; and he could have suspended that law of nature by which depraved parents generate depraved children. Had it been his pleasure, Jesus Christ might have had a human father as well as a human mother; and have been, nevertheless, without sin; for with God all things are possible. But it was not the pleasure of God that he should be so born; and the reason for his conception by the power of the Holy Ghost, is given in the words of the angel to his virgin mother: "*Therefore*, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."[1] Ordinary generation would have made him the son of man: but his generation was extraordinary, because he was also the son of God. The conception by the Holy Ghost did not give the offspring an intermediate nature between the divine and the human, such as the demigods of the heathen were supposed to possess. In that case, Christ, as the son of God, would have been the son of the Holy Ghost, and not of the Father. But the Holy Spirit was the agent in preparing the body in which the sacrifice was to be made; and such was the union between it and the divinity, that the name, Son of God, belonged to the entire person so constituted.

Section II.—DIVINITY.

Jesus Christ was God.[2]

As the humanity of Christ, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, could not be known but from the testimony of the Scriptures; so his divinity, considering that he was born of a human mother, could not be known but from the testimony of the same unerring word. The conception by the Holy Ghost is sufficient to intimate that he was not to be an ordinary man; and the declaration that, in consequence of it, he was to be called the Son of God, leads the mind to conceive that, in some sense, he was to partake of the

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[1] Luke i. 35.

[2] Mic. v. 2; Heb. i. 8; xiii. 8; Rev. i. 8, 18; John ii. 24; x. 15; xxi. 17; Acts i. 24; Rev. ii. 23; Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20; John i. 48; Col. ii. 3; Jude 25; Matt. iii. 17; Luke i. 35; x. 22; John v. 23; 1 John v. 20; Matt. xxviii. 19; Isaiah xl. 3; Zech. ii. 8, 10; iv. 8; Mal. iii. 1; Matt. iii. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 47; Rev. xix. 16; Isaiah ix. 6; John i. 1; Rom. ix. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 8; 1 John v. 20; Phil. ii. 6; Matt. xxviii. 9; Luke xxiii. 42; Acts vii. 59; Rev. v. 12; John i. 3, 10; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 10; Neh. ix.

divine nature. Demigods, according to the heathen, had an intermediate nature between that of gods and men. But we have seen that Jesus Christ was properly a man, according to the testimony of the Scriptures; and we have now to appeal to the same testimony to learn whether he was also properly God.

The proofs on this point are abundant, and will be produced under several distinct heads.

I. The names of God are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

"The Word was God."[1] This testimony of the beloved disciple is the more important, because it was his design to inform us who his divine Master was. As he opens his First Epistle with an account of Jesus Christ, as the "eternal life which was with the Father,"[2] so he opens his Gospel with an account of him as the Word which was with God, and which was God. The subsequent part of the chapter clearly shows that this Word became flesh,[3] in the person of Jesus Christ, and the name Word is given elsewhere, by the same writer, to Jesus Christ.[4] Now it is incredible that the Gospel should open with a declaration which has misled its readers, in all ages, into a belief that Jesus Christ is God, if he were nothing more than a mere man. To no purpose has this apostle said most earnestly, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols,"[5] if his own teachings are such as must inevitably lead to idolatry. His language is usually very plain and simple: but in this case it needs the torture of most ingenious criticism, if it does not teach the deity of Christ. He has written that we might believe in Christ, and, believing, might have life through his name;[6] but if he has so written as to lead our souls into the sin of idolatry, our faith must be to death rather than life.

"Who is over all, God blessed for ever."[7] Christ is here called God; not in some subordinate sense, but over all, and blessed for ever. His possession of human nature is signified in the phrase, "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." In contrast with this, his divinity is distinctly brought to view. What he was, *according to the flesh*, is not all that he was; but above that, he

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[1] John i. 1. [2] 1 John i. 3. [3] John i. 14.
[4] Rev. xix. 13. [5] 1 John v. 21. [6] John xx. 31.
[7] Rom. ix. 5.

was over all, God, blessed for ever. All the criticisms which have been tried on this text leave its testimony plain and decisive.

"My Lord and my God."[1] These words of Thomas are a brief, but very expressive declaration of his faith; and were so received by his Master: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed."[2] So, the unfolding of Christ's true character to the mind of Nathaniel, drew forth his declaration of faith, "Thou art the Son of God.[3] So this confession of Thomas was elicited by the opening of the Saviour's character to his mind. Both of them were doubtless taught by the same Spirit which revealed Christ's character to Peter;[4] and the faith of both was accepted, and publicly approved. If Christ had not been God, it behoved him to correct his disciple, and save him from idolatry.

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever."[5] In this place, as in the first chapter of John, the inspired writer is designedly stating who Jesus Christ was. He has represented him as superior to the prophets, by whom God spake in times past to the fathers;—as superior to the angels;—as the proper object of angelic worship;—and finally closes the account with quotations from the Old Testament, applied to him, in which he is called God, and Lord, and said to have made the heavens and earth, and to endure for ever. If he was not God, Paul was mistaken.

To these texts in which the name God is applied to Jesus Christ, we may add the following: "The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."[6] "God was manifest in the flesh."[7] "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God, and eternal life."[8] "So then every one of us must give account of himself to God;"[9] compared with the preceding verse. "He that built all things, is God,"[10] considered in connection with the context, which shows that the Son is the builder here intended.

Several other passages may be cited as pertinent examples, if the translation of them, given in our common English version, be amended. "The appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus

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[1] John xx. 28. [2] John xx. 29. [3] John i. 49.
[4] Matt. xvi. 17. [5] Heb. i. 8. [6] Acts xx. 28.
[7] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [8] 1 John v. 20. [9] Rom. xiv. 12.
[10] Heb. iii. 4.

Christ."[1] "The grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ."[2] "In the kingdom of the Christ and God," *i. e.* of him who is both Christ and God.[3] "Before the God and Lord, Jesus Christ."[4] "The righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."[5] These emendations of the translation are not made arbitrarily, but are required by a rule of criticism, founded on the usage of Greek writers, as to the repetition of the article, when prefixed to two nouns connected by a conjunction.

II. The attributes of God are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Eternity.—In a prediction concerning him by Isaiah, it is said: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."[6] The phrase "Everlasting Father" may be rendered the *Father of Eternity.* Were this name given to him by erring men, we might suppose it inappropriate: but it is given to him by the infallible Spirit that spoke in the ancient prophets. In another prophecy concerning him, it is said: "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."[7] We know that this prophecy referred to Christ; for it is expressly applied to him in Matt. ii. 6. In the book of Proverbs, ch. viii., Wisdom is introduced, saying: "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. * * Then I was with him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."[8] The most consistent interpretation of this passage, applies it to Christ, the Eternal Word, who is called "the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God."[9] To these passages, we may add the words of Christ: "Before Abraham was, I am."[10] As his human nature was not fifty years old, these words could not refer to it. They attribute existence to him of more ancient date than the time of Abraham; and, in affirming that pre-existence, the present tense, I am, is employed. This very extraordinary mode of speaking, agrees precisely with Old Testament language, describing the self-existent Jehovah: "I am that I am." "I am hath sent me."[11]

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[1] Titus ii. 13.
[2] 2 Thess. i. 12.
[3] Eph. v. 5.
[4] 1 Tim. v. 21.
[5] 2 Peter i. 1.
[6] Isaiah ix. 6.
[7] Micah v. 2.
[8] Prov. viii. 23–31.
[9] 1 Cor. i. 24.
[10] John viii. 58.
[11] Ex. iii. 14.

The Jews who heard Jesus speak thus concerning himself, understood him to claim divinity; and if he did not design to do so, it is undeniable that he employed language well calculated to mislead them.

Immutability.—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."[1] "They shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same."[2]

Omnipresence.—Christ promised to be with his disciples always, even to the end of the world,[3] and, not only at all times, but at all places: "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[4] To fulfill this promise, he must be omnipresent. The same is implied in the words, "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of man which is in Heaven."[5] His body was on earth, when he spoke these words; and yet he declares himself to be in Heaven. This could not be true, if he were not omnipresent.

Omniscience.—Jesus knew the thoughts of men, even while shut up in their own breasts. Other prophets had this knowledge communicated to them, by special revelation, on particular occasions; but Jesus had his knowledge at all times. "He knew all men, and needed not that any one should testify of man; for he knew what was in man."[6] To know the secrets of the heart, belongs peculiarly to Jehovah. "Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart."[7] Yet the power of searching the heart, is expressly ascribed to Jesus. "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts."[8] Peter appealed to Christ, as knowing the secrets of his heart, and expressly ascribes omniscience to him. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."[9] Christ claimed omniscience in the words, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."[10] Without omniscience, Christ would not be qualified to judge the world.

Omnipotence.—Paul, feeling his own weakness, desired the power of Christ to rest upon him;[11] and he conceived of that power

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[1] Heb. xiii. 8.
[2] Heb. i. 11, 12.
[3] Matt. xxviii. 20.
[4] Matt. xviii. 20.
[5] John iii. 13.
[6] John ii. 25.
[7] Jer. xvii. 10.
[8] Rev. ii. 23.
[9] John xxi. 17.
[10] Matt. xi. 29.
[11] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

as infinite, when he said: "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me."[1] The omnipotence of Christ is manifested in the works which he performs, of which we shall presently speak more particularly. He claimed like omnipotence with the Father: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[2] "What things soever the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise."[3] "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."[4] In the prophecy already quoted from Isaiah, he is called "the Mighty God;" and in Rev. i. 8–11, he is called "the Almighty."

III. Divine works are ascribed to Christ.

Creation.—"All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made."[5] "By him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible."[6] We may admit, that the word "by" frequently denotes an instrument used in a work; but this is not its invariable meaning. It is applied to God the Father. "It became him, of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."[7] If Christ was a created instrument, used in the creation of everything else, he was himself created without such instrumentality, and the words of John were not true, "Without him was not anything made that was made." God created all things by Jesus Christ,[8] not as a mere instrument, or as an inferior agent; otherwise it could not be said, "All things were created by him and for him."[9] An inferior agent, employed to do a work, performs it not for himself, but for the superior who employs him. The Son co-operated with the Father in the work of creation, as supreme God. The word "by" implies no inferiority. When it is said of Christ, he by himself purged our sins,[10] himself does not denote an agent inferior to Christ.

Providence.—All things are kept in being by the power of Christ, and he must, therefore, be God. "Upholding all things by the word of his power."[11] All the powers of the universe are

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[1] Phil. iv. 13.
[2] John v. 17.
[3] John v. 19.
[4] John x. 27, 28.
[5] John i. 3.
[6] Col. i. 16.
[7] Heb. ii. 10.
[8] Eph. iii. 9.
[9] Col. i. 16.
[10] Heb. i. 3
[11] Heb. i. 3.

under his management, and therefore all the workings of providence are directed by him.

Giving of life.—Christ raised the dead to life during his personal ministry, not as prophets and apostles did, in the name and by the power of another. The apostles wrought miracles, not by their own power, but in the name of Jesus Christ.[1] Jesus, on the contrary, claimed the power which he exercised in the working of miracles. "The Son quickeneth whom he will."[2] He claimed to exercise his power, both in the quickening of souls dead in sin, and in the resurrection of the body. "The hour is come, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."[3] "The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."[4] The power of raising the dead, is attributed by Paul to Christ, and is called the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.[5]

IV. Numerous passages of the Old Testament, which unquestionably speak of Jehovah, the Supreme God, are, in the New Testament, applied to Jesus Christ. Isaiah vi. 3, compared with John xii. 41; Isaiah xl. 3, compared with Matt. iii. 1, 3; Isaiah xlv. 21–23, compared with Phil. ii. 9–11; Zach. xii. 10, compared with John xix. 37.

V. Divine worship was commanded to be rendered, and was rendered, to Jesus Christ. The angels were commanded to worship him. "When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith: 'Let all the angels of God worship him.'"[6] Men are commanded to believe in him, trust in him, which are acts of divine worship. This has more force when compared with the declaration: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm."[7] Christ permitted himself to be worshipped as the Son of God.[8] He was worshipped by his disciples, after his ascension to Heaven.[9] They were accustomed to call on his name,[10] that is, to address prayer to him. So the dying Stephen prayed: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."[11] The administering or receiving of

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[1] Acts iii. 12; iv. 10.
[2] John v. 21.
[3] John v. 25.
[4] John v. 28, 29.
[5] Phil. iii. 21.
[6] Heb. i. 6.
[7] Jer. xvii. 5.
[8] John ix. 38.
[9] Luke xxiv. 52.
[10] Acts ix. 14.
[11] Acts vii. 59.

baptism in his name, is an act of religious worship, in which he is honored equally with the Father, and the Holy Spirit.[1]

VI. The equality of the Son with the Father, is taught by Paul, in Phil. ii. 9. His example, in humbling himself, and taking on himself the form of a servant, is proposed for our imitation; but there was no humiliation in his taking on himself the form of a servant, if that had been the only character that he could rightfully assume. But he had a right to claim equality with God, and this fact showed the greatness of his humiliation. A parallel passage is found in 2 Cor. viii. 9: "Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor."

VII. If Jesus Christ was not God, he was justly condemned to death.

It is difficult to state and unfold this argument, without an appearance of irreverence. To charge the divine Jesus with crime, even hypothetically, is grating to the feelings of those who love and adore him. But it must be remembered that he who is, by this argument, proved to be chargeable with crime, is the Jesus of another gospel, a mere man, whose character and conduct are to be judged like those of other men.

Jesus was condemned to death by the Jewish Sanhedrim. That council reported to Pilate, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."[2] On a former occasion, Jesus said unto them: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[3] And they charged him with blasphemy, because he made God his [own] Father, thereby making himself equal with God. It was in this peculiar sense that the charge of making himself the Son of God was construed, or it would not have amounted to blasphemy. The high priest who was the president of the council, put Christ on his oath, "I adjure thee by the living God;"[4] and propounded to him two questions which, though mentioned together by Matthew and Mark, are by Luke stated as proposed separately. "Art thou the Christ?" and "Art thou the Son of God?" It was the affirmative reply of Jesus to the last of these questions, which was the ground of his condemnation. Jesus knew the sense in which the question was propounded; and

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[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[2] John xix. 7.
[3] John v. 17.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 62.

he was bound, on correct principles of morals, in answering the question, to answer it honestly and truly in the sense in which he knew that the high priest meant it. He therefore affirmed on oath, at that tribunal, that he was the Son of God, in this high sense. For this he was condemned to death; and if he was not what he claimed to be, he was guilty of perjury and of his own death. On this charge he was condemned to death, by the Council, but God justified him by raising him from the dead. "Declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."[1] This proved that his condemnation was unjust; and that he was truly what he had claimed to be, the Son of God, in the sense which the Jews accounted blasphemy.

The last argument exhibits the importance of this doctrine in a strong light. According to the law of Moses, any one who enticed to idolatry was to be punished with death.[2] The council before which Jesus was tried, was the court which had cognisance of this offence. A mere man, who should claim divine honor to himself, was guilty of this capital crime; and although the Romans had taken away from the Jews the power of inflicting capital punishment, the council might, with perfect propriety, report to the governor concerning such a man, "By our law he ought to die." This was their decision, as reported to Pilate, concerning Jesus; and, if he was not entitled to the divine honor which he claimed, the decision was just.

Two accusations were brought against Jesus. Before the Roman governor he was charged with treason against Cæsar, by making himself king. Into this accusation the governor inquired, asking Jesus, "Art thou a king?" Jesus answered in the affirmative, as in the other case: but, that he might not convict himself of a crime of which he was not guilty, he explained, "My kingdom is not of this world."[3] His reply was satisfactory to the governor, who acquitted him on this charge. In the other case he not only claimed to be the Son of God, but accompanied the claim with no explanation, to prevent the passing of the sentence. He might have said, I am the Son of God, but not in such a sense as to claim divine honor. He made no such explanation. If Jesus was not entitled to divine honor, he knew it; and he knew also that

[1] Rom. i. 4. [2] Deut. xiii. 6, 8. [3] John xviii. 36.

he deserved death, under the decision of this court, for claiming it. To make the claim before the court, was to be guilty of the crime. To answer as he did, on oath, if he did not mean to make the claim, was perjury. And to permit the sentence against him to pass, without any effort to explain, was to be guilty of his own death. It follows, therefore, that Jesus Christ, if not entitled to divine honor, was a wicked man and a deceiver.

We might suppose the possibility of mistake, concerning Christ's claim of divine honor before the court that condemned him, if he had habitually disclaimed such honor in his previous ministry. But, instead of this, he had taught, "It is the will of God, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."[1] He claimed superiority to the law of the Sabbath, and the right of working every day, as his Father did: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[2] He claimed to have been before Abraham, in language which appropriately intimates self-existence: "Before Abraham was, I am."[3] He claimed to be one with the Father: "I and my Father are one."[4] Moreover, he never rejected divine honor, when offered him. Paul and Barnabas, at Lystra, indignantly repelled those who approached to do them honor as gods;[5] and the angel hastily prevented John from worshipping him: "See thou do it not. Worship God."[6] When the people were minded to take him by force, and make him king, he escaped from them. He refused to be "a judge or divider,"[7] and declined all civil honor, in perfect consistence with his disclaimer of it before Pilate. But in equal consistence with his claim of divine honor before the Sanhedrim, he never rejected it when offered by any one. The man to whom he had given sight worshipped him as the Son of God,[8] without rebuke; and Thomas addressed him, "My Lord and my God;" not only without rebuke, but with approbation.[9] To all this we may add, that the disciples to whom he taught the principles of his religion, and who believed that they had the mind of Christ, were accustomed to render him divine honor. Many proofs of his deity have been cited above, from their writings. That Paul did not consider him a mere man, is most clear from

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[1] John v. 23. [2] John v. 17. [3] John viii. 58.
[4] John x. 30. [5] Acts xiv. 15. [6] Rev. xxii. 9.
[7] Luke xii. 14. [8] John ix. 38. [9] John xx. 28, 29.

Gal. i. 1: Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ;" and the whole tenor of his writings shows, that he felt such obligations to Christ, and reposed such trust in him, as are utterly inconsistent with the belief that he was a mere creature.

From these facts, we must believe that the deity of Christ is an essential doctrine of Christianity. As there can be no religion without the existence of God; so there can be no Christian creed in which the doctrine of Christ's deity is not a fundamental article.

But, clear and abundant as the proofs on this subject are, the humble inquirer into the truth as it is in Jesus, is sometimes perplexed with difficulties respecting it. The more common of these it will be proper briefly to consider.

Obj. 1. This doctrine is inconsistent with the Unity of God. This objection will be considered hereafter, under the head of "The Trinity."

Obj. 2. In various passages Jesus Christ is spoken of as distinct from God, and sometimes in such a manner as seems to deny his proper deity.

Before we proceed, under this head, to examine particular passages, we may premise that the Scriptures speak of a two-fold connection between the Godhead and the man Jesus Christ—a personal union and an indwelling. The personal union is not with the whole Godhead, but with one person or subsistence therein. It was not the whole Godhead that was made flesh; but the Word that was with God, and was God. God sent forth, not the whole Godhead, but his Son, made of a woman.[1] On the other hand, the indwelling is of the whole Godhead. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.[2] The Father dwelt in him,[3] and the Spirit was given to him without measure.[4] This indwelling did not make him one person with the Father and the Holy Spirit. His body was a temple for the whole Godhead. As the Holy Ghost, in the prophets, was distinct from the prophets; so the Godhead, dwelling in Jesus Christ, was distinct from the person of Jesus Christ.

John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee

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[1] Gal. iv. 4.
[2] Col. ii. 9.
[3] John xiv. 10.
[4] John iii. 34.

the only true God; and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The Father is here addressed, as the representative of the Godhead. The Godhead that sent Christ is distinct from the person of Jesus Christ; but the person sent was nevertheless divine. His divinity, though not affirmed in the passage, may be inferred from the fact that the knowledge of him was necessary to eternal life.

1 Cor. viii. 6. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Here, again, the Father is the representative of the entire Godhead, which is in him, as the object of ultimate worship, and is one. "Of whom are all things." The same Godhead is in Jesus Christ as the medium of manifestation. "By whom are all things." This text does not affirm that Jesus Christ is a divine person; but his qualification to be universal Lord implies it. This text no more denies Jesus Christ to be God, than it denies the Father to be Lord.

In the same manner other similar passages may be explained.

Obj. 3. The various passages which speak of Jesus Christ as inferior to the Father, as sent by the Father, and as working by the power of the Father, appear to deny his proper deity.

The explanation of all these passages is given by Paul in Phil. ii. 5–8. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The Son of God, though truly divine, and entitled to divine honor, humbled himself; and, by his union with human nature, was made under the law. He was not originally under the law, but was made under it. Hence we read of his inferiority to the Father, his subjection to the Father's authority, &c. Inferiority of office does not require inferiority of nature. A subject is inferior in authority to his king; though he is equal to him in nature, and may surpass him in intellectual and moral worth. Jesus Christ is inferior to the Father in his human nature, and his mediatorial office; but in his divine nature he is God over all.

Obj. 4. Jesus Christ appears, in Luke xviii. 19, to admit that

he had not the goodness peculiar to God; and, in Mark xiii. 32 to deny that he had omniscience.

"Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, that is God." These words are a question. Questions sometimes imply strong affirmation; but, in such cases, the reason of asking them must be apparent. In the present case there is nothing in the whole context indicating that it was Christ's design to explain his own character; and we may therefore conclude that the question was asked for another purpose. The young ruler thought himself to be a good man, and addressing Christ as another good man, from whom he was willing to receive instruction, asked, in the spirit of self-righteousness, "What *good* thing shall I do?"[1] The whole of Christ's discourse with this young man was designed to convince him of his self-righteousness, and the question with which it commenced was precisely adapted to this purpose. It was calculated to lead his mind to the humbling reflection that all human goodness, such as he trusted in, and such as he had attributed to Christ, was insignificant and worthless when brought into comparison with God. Whether divine goodness belonged to Jesus Christ is here neither affirmed nor denied. This question the ruler never thought of, and Christ made no reference to it, and said nothing about it.

Mark xiii. 32. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven; neither the Son, but my Father only." This passage must be explained in harmony with other Scriptures. Were Gen. xviii. 21 the only passage of Scripture from which we could learn anything respecting the extent of God's knowledge, we should conclude that it is not unlimited; and, in like manner, if Mark xiii. 32 were the only text from which we could learn the extent of Christ's knowledge, we should infer that he is not omniscient. But the proofs of his omniscience, as before adduced, are so abundant, that we are obliged to seek an explanation of this passage which shall be consistent with them. When we consider that it was the spirit of Christ in the ancient prophets, that enabled them to make their numerous predictions—that he personally predicted so many things, and so much in particular concerning this very day,[2] and that this day is emphatically called

[1] Matt. xix. 16.

[2] Phil. i. 6.

the day of Christ, the day of the Lord,[1] it seems improbable that he should be wholly ignorant of the time of its coming. He describes himself as a lord, coming unexpectedly on his servants after a season of absence. Now, although we can see a propriety that the servants should not know when their lord would come, no reason appears why the lord himself should not know it. These facts, therefore, favor an interpretation of the passage which will be consistent with the doctrine of Christ's omniscience.

The most obvious method of interpreting the passage in harmony with other Scriptures, is to suppose that it refers to the knowledge which Christ's humanity possessed. In this nature he was not omniscient; for it is said[2] that Jesus increased in wisdom. The Holy Spirit communicated to his human soul, from time to time, such knowledge as was necessary; but not *all* knowledge, for human nature could not be made omniscient. There is, however, an objection to this interpretation, on the ground that Christ could not, with truth, deny of himself any knowledge which either nature possessed. This objection would be embarrassing, if it were not true that Christ, in the passage, has placed his knowledge and that of his Father in contrast. In the same manner he has denied omnipotence of himself, in John v. 30; not absolutely, but as distinct from his Father. "I can, of mine own self, do nothing." In the same verse, he, in the same sense, speaks of himself as without omniscience also: "As I hear, I judge." The question, "When shall these things be?" was proposed by the disciples[3] to Christ as visible before them in his human nature. It was not proper that they should receive an answer; for it was intended that they should watch: "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh."[4] As the human nature of Christ was the medium through which the disciples received their instruction, and as this was one of the times and seasons which the Father had reserved in his own power,[5] we may suppose that the Holy Spirit had not communicated, and the holy humanity of Jesus had not sought this knowledge, which was unnecessary to any of the purposes of his present ministry. In this view it was well calculated to check the inquisitiveness of his

[1] Cor. v. 5. [2] Luke ii. 52. [3] Mark xiii. 4.
[4] Mark xiii. 35. [5] Acts i. 7.

disciples into this matter which it was not the will of God that they should know, for him to inform them, that though the infinite stores of his Father's knowledge were ever accessible to him, he had not chosen, in his distinct character, in which he revealed the counsels of God to them, to inquire into the matter, and could not, therefore, communicate to them the knowledge which their unprofitable curiosity led them to desire.

Some have thought it a more satisfactory solution of the difficulty to take the word know in the sense *to make known*. This sense it is alleged to have in 1 Cor. ii. 2; but this may be doubted. It seems more proper to regard the language as a common rhetorical figure, according to which the cause is put for the effect. So David said, "I was dumb;"[1] meaning, "I was as silent as if I had been dumb." So Paul determined, in his ministry among the Corinthians, to be as though he knew nothing but Christ crucified. In the same manner, the words of Christ may be interpreted as if he had said, "Your inquiries into the precise time of my coming will all be in vain. No source of information will be available, to give you this knowledge. As to the effect, it will be to you as if the knowledge were possessed by none but the Father; who will make it known, not by the ministry of men, angels, or his Son; but by his own hand, in the execution of his purpose."

The two views of this passage which have been presented, differ somewhat from each other; but the inquirer is not bound to decide on their comparative merit, or to accept either as unquestionably correct. A perfect understanding of every difficult text, though desirable, is not indispensable to the exercise of piety.

Obj. 5. Jesus Christ is called "the beginning of the creation of God;" and "the firstborn of every creature." These passages, while they attribute a high character to him, nevertheless speak of him as a creature.

Rev. iii. 14. "The beginning of the creation of God." This text may be explained by others in the same book: Rev. i. 8; xxi. 6; xxii. 13. When Jesus Christ is called "the beginning and the end, the first and the last," we are not to understand that he was created before other creatures, and that other creatures will be annihilated, leaving him to survive them. The sense is, that

[1] Ps. xxxix. 9.

all things are from him and to him; or, as Paul says, "All things were created by him and for him."[1] He is the original and the first cause of all things. His being the beginning, is explained "He is before all things." In this sense he is the beginning of the creation of God, *i. e.* its original cause.

Col i. 15. "The first born of every creature." The clause "first born of every creature," may be grammatically construed in two different ways. The genitive "of every creature" may be governed by the word "first born," as a noun; or by the word "first," as an adjective of the superlative degree in composition. The objection assumes that the last of these is the true construction. Having decided on this, it then infers that Christ is one of the creatures, because the superlative degree usually compares one thing of a group with the rest of that group. But this usage of the superlative, though general, is not invariable: for this same word "first" is twice used in the first chapter of John,[2] where the comparison is of a different kind, and our translators have, on this account, rendered the word as if it had been in the comparative, instead of the superlative degree: "He was *before* me." In proof that Paul did not design to group Christ with the creatures, as one of them, the following arguments may be adduced. The descriptive terms employed do not accord with this supposition. To make him one of the group, Christ should have been called the first *created* of all creatures, or the first born of all born: but the distinction between being born and being created, excludes him from the group of creatures.

2. There is a further incongruity in the use of the word "every." We could not say, Solomon was the wisest of every man. Yet the objection makes Paul use this mode of speech. It is true that this incongruity may be in part removed by translating the clause thus: "the first born of all creation." But even this would not naturally express the idea supposed to be intended. A plural noun is needed, to denote the group of which Christ is supposed to be one of the constituent parts.

3. The context proves that Paul did not design to compare Christ with created things, as one of the number. He says, "All things were created by him and for him; and he is before all

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[1] Col. i. 16.

[2] John i. 15, 30.

things, and by him all things consist."[1] This language clearly excludes him from the number of created things.

If we admit that the genitive is governed by the adjective, the arguments adduced should satisfy us that the adjective must be understood, as in the places referred to in the first chapter of John. But the construction, which takes the genitive to be governed by the noun, is preferable. According to this, we may translate the clause, "the whole creation's first born." God said, "I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth."[2] The term "first born" here denotes superiority of dignity, in comparison with the kings of the earth. To the first born belonged, not only superior dignity, but superior right of inheritance. Christ, as the Son, was appointed "heir of all things."[3] In respect both of dignity and inheritance, he is "the creation's first born," the king and heir of the whole creation.

From the fact that the same Greek word is used in v. 18, some have supposed that this verse is explanatory of the former, and that Christ is the first born of every creature, because he is the first born from the dead. Others, by accenting the Greek word in v. 15 on a different syllable, make it to signify "first begetter," or "first producer."

Some, who admit the proper deity of Christ, suppose that his human soul was created before all other creatures, and continued without a human body until the incarnation in the womb of the virgin. But, according to this opinion, Christ was not "made like his brethren." Moreover, as that human soul, being a creature, must have been under law to God from the beginning of its existence, it was not true that he was made under the law, when he was made of a woman, as is taught in Gal. iv. 4. We have seen that the texts do not require such a hypothesis to explain them.

Obj. 6. Jesus, in John x. 35, 36, explained his use of the phrase, "Son of God," as not implying proper deity. "If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

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[1] Col i. 16, 17. [2] Ps. lxxxix. 27. [3] Heb. i. 2.

As this objection opposes a very strong argument for the divinity of Christ, it will be proper to give it a careful examination.

In examining the tenth chapter of John, in which these words are found, we may observe the following facts:

1. The claim to be the Christ was not that on which the charge of blasphemy was founded.

While Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch, the Jews gathered round him, and asked, "How long makest thou us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." They had asked John the Baptist, "Art thou the Christ?" The Jews were in expectation that their Messiah would make his appearance about this time; and, from the manner in which these questions were proposed, it is plain that the claim to be the Christ could not necessarily be blasphemous. It only needed to be sustained by proper proof, and the proposing of the question intimated a readiness to admit the claim. Jesus did not directly answer their question, but charged them with rejecting the testimony which he had previously given concerning himself, and the proofs which he had adduced. All this they bore, without charging him with blasphemy.

2. The charge of blasphemy was founded on the claim to be the Son of God.

This point is clear from the words of Christ, "Say ye, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" He had spoken of God as his Father in a peculiar relation, according to which he could say, "I and my Father are one." This was said after such declarations concerning the power by which his sheep were kept, as represented himself omnipotent as well as his Father. His oneness with the Father was, therefore, such a unity as implied his possession of divine attributes. So the Jews understood him; and this they distinctly declared to be the ground of their charge: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; because thou being a man, makest thyself God." On a former occasion they had made out the same charge against him on the same ground. He had spoken of God as his father in a peculiar sense, which implied co-operation with the Father, beyond what a mere creature could claim; and they who heard him, understanding the high claim which he set up, charged him with blasphemy, because "he called God his Father, making himself equal

with God."[1] It was precisely on this ground that he was reported to Pilate, by the Jewish Sanhedrim, as worthy of death: "By our law, he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."[2] They also reported to Pilate that "he made himself Christ a king;" but they do not say that for so doing he deserved to die by their law. They said, "Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."[3] This was an offence of which the Roman law might take cognisance, and which Pilate might judge; but the other offence was a sin of which the Roman law would take no cognisance. The charge of blasphemy was investigated by the Jewish court, and was not made out on the claim to be "Christ a king."

3. Jesus knew that the charge of blasphemy would be left without foundation, if he should explain that, in claiming divine Sonship, he did not mean to claim divine attributes or honors.

The charge of blasphemy was, for making himself God, and equal with God. Now, the Jews called God their Father; and believers and angels are called sons of God. To claim sonship in this sense could not be blasphemy. Jesus knew all this, and showed himself able to avail himself of the plea which might be based on this distinction. He referred to the Scripture use of the term "gods," in its application to Hebrew magistrates; and showed clearly, that, if the words which he had used were to be justified by availing himself of this distinction, he understood well how to do it.

4. Jesus did not plead, that in making himself the Son of God, he did not intend to claim divine attributes or honors.

What has been supposed to imply this, is merely a question, which affirms nothing: "Say ye?" In this aspect, it is like the question proposed to the young ruler: "Why callest thou me good?" Jesus was not now on trial before a regular court, but was addressed by a company of malignant and captious men, to whom he did not feel bound to give answers and explanations at their demand. When they asked to know plainly, whether he was the Christ, instead of answering them, he charged them with rejecting the testimony and proofs which he had already given, and with murderous intentions towards him. So, when they state their

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[1] John v. 17, 18. [2] John xix. 7. [3] John xix. 12.

charge of blasphemy, he charged them with inconsistency in making it out. They were desirous to condemn him. When he was finally delivered to the Roman governor, "Pilate knew that the chief priests had for envy delivered him to them."[1] Jesus, who knew what was in man, fully understood that their pretended jealousy for the divine honor, was hypocritical. Some of them, as members of the great council, could readily have found Scripture for being themselves styled "Gods," yet they would give no patient attention to the proofs which Jesus offered, to sustain his claim to the dignity he assumed.

5. Instead of leaving the matter to rest on the plea which these words have been supposed to imply, Jesus reasserted his intimate union with the Father: "That ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."[2] After this, it is added, "therefore they sought again to take him." It is manifest that the Jews did not understand him to retract the claim which had given them offence.

The Jewish magistrates, though called gods, in a subordinate sense of the term, had nothing of that intimate union with the Father which Jesus claimed. They were, after all, mortal men. "I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High; but ye shall die like men."[3] But concerning himself, Jesus had said: "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."[4] "The Son quickeneth whom he will."[5] "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God."[6] The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son."[7] "I and my Father are one."[8] If, after making these high claims, Jesus had quailed before his enemies, and sought shelter in likening himself to mortal judges, called gods, he would not have closed his address by re-asserting that which had given them offence. "Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me."

We should remember that Jesus was not now on trial. These words were not spoken before the Sanhedrim, where the plea which they are supposed to contain, was needed, if needed at all. When formally arraigned before that tribunal, Jesus did not object to

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[1] Matt. xxvii. 18. [2] John x. 38. [3] Ps. lxxxii. 6 7.
[4] John v. 26. [5] John v. 21. [6] John v. 25.
[7] John v. 22. [8] John x. 30.

their jurisdiction, nor to the oath administered by the high priest. He answered directly and plainly the question which the high priest propounded, though he knew well that the answer which he gave would, in the judgment of the court, convict him of blasphemy. Where now is the plea which he is supposed to have made on the former occasion? He then understood its bearing on the point. Has he forgotten it now? The plea urged on a former occasion, at a different place, to a different company, when not on trial, and not on oath, cannot avail now, unless repeated in due form. Besides, when before made, if made at all, it was obscure, and hidden under the form of a question. It is now needed in plainness and by direct affirmation. But Jesus does not produce the plea. Let those who urge the objection we are considering, account for his silence.

Section III.—UNION OF NATURES.

THE TWO NATURES OF JESUS CHRIST, THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN, ARE UNITED IN ONE PERSON.[1]

The name Son of God, properly denotes his divine nature; and the name Son of Man, his human nature. He frequently called himself the Son of God; more frequently, the Son of Man. Both these names were used as denoting one and the same person. The whole use of them indicates this; but there are some passages which show it more clearly than others. After speaking of himself as the Son of God, he says the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the son of man.[2] Here the same person is manifestly called the Son of God, and the Son of Man. In other cases, attributes or works which belong to one nature, are ascribed to his person, denoted by the name which is derived from the other nature. "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven."[3] Here he is named from his human nature, the Son of Man; while omnipresence is ascribed to him, which belongs to his divine nature. Another example of like kind is, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."[4] The superiority to the Sab-

[1] John iii. 13; Rom. i. 4; ix. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 8; Matt. i. 23.
[2] John v. 27. [3] John iii. 13. [4] Mark ii. 28.

bath belongs to his divine nature, but the name by which he is designated belongs to the human. On the other hand, he is called God, and the Lord of Glory, when his blood and his crucifixion, things pertaining to his human flesh, are the subjects of discourse. "They would not have crucified the Lord of Glory."[1] "The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."[2]

How two natures so widely different, should be so united, we cannot understand. In the union of the body and soul of man in one person, there is a similar fact which we are unable to comprehend; but if we should disbelieve it, we should reject the testimony of our own consciousness. We have, therefore, no plea for rejecting the doctrine now before us, on the ground of its mysteriousness.

The union of the two natures does not confound the properties peculiar to each. The humanity is not deified, nor the divinity humanized. So, the body of man does not become spirit, by its union with the soul; nor does the soul become matter, by its union with the body.

The union of Christ's divinity with his humanity, is a different thing from the indwelling of the Godhead in him. The Holy Ghost dwells in believers, so that their bodies are called his temple, but this union does not constitute them one person. So, though Jesus said, "The Father is in me, and I in him," he addressed his Father, and spoke of him, as a distinct person. The same is true of the Holy Spirit which dwelt in him, being given to him without measure.

The personal union is more than a mere manifestation of the divine nature through the human. God manifests himself in the works of creation. But this manifestation is not a personal union; otherwise, the universe must be God.

This union is indissoluble. Jesus will ever be the Lamb in the midst of the throne,[3] and will for ever appear, in his glorified humanity, to the worshipping saints, who, with adoring praise, will for ever sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory and blessing."[4]

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[1] 1 Cor. ii. 8.
[2] Acts xx. 28.
[3] Rev. vii. 17.
[4] Rev. v. 12.

CHAPTER II.

STATES OF CHRIST.

Section I.—ORIGINAL GLORY.

Before his incarnation, the Son of God was in intimate communion of glory and blessedness with the Father.[1]

The existence of Christ, previous to his appearing in the world, is proved by passages of Scripture, that do not expressly declare his divinity.

If we had no further teaching on the subject, we might suppose that he was a created spirit, had enjoyed honor and happiness in the presence of God, and had consented to appear, in obedience to the will of God, in the person of Jesus Christ. But the proofs which have been adduced from other parts of Scripture, clearly show that this pre-existent spirit was God, and not a creature.

Several names are ascribed to the pre-existent divinity of Jesus Christ. John calls him the Word of God.[2] He is more frequently called the Son of God. Various passages speak of him as the Son of God, antecedent to his coming into the world. He is called the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord's presence, the Angel of the Covenant, the Captain of the Lord's hosts. It is also supposed that he is intended to be designated, in the 8th chapter of Proverbs, by the name Wisdom.

To ascertain the precise import of these several names, is attended with difficulty. He appears to be called the Angel or Messenger, because he is sent to make known, or to execute, the will of God. He is probably called the Word of God, because he is the medium through which the mind of God is made known. Why he is called the Son of God, is a question on which divines

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[1] John i. 15, 30; iii. 13, 17, 31; vi. 38; viii. 58; xvii. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 47; Gen. xviii.; xxii. 15; xxxii. 30; Ex. iii.; xx.; Acts vii. 30, 35, 38; John i. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2, 10; Mic. v. 2; John viii. 58; Heb. i. 8; xiii. 8; Rev. i. 8, 18.

[2] John i. 1.

have differed. His miraculous conception, his mediatorial office, his resurrection from the dead, and his investiture with supreme dominion, have been severally assigned, as the reason of the title; but these appear rather to declare him to be the Son of God, or to belong to him because of that relation, than to constitute it. The phrases first-born, first-begotten, only-begotten, seem to refer to the true ground of the name, Son of God: but what these signify, it is probably impossible for us to understand. The ideas of peculiar endearment, dignity, and heirship, which are attached to these terms, as used among men, may be supposed to belong to them, as applied to the Son of God; but all gross conceptions of their import, as if they were designed to convey to our minds the idea of derived existence, and the mode of that derivation, ought to be discarded as inconsistent with the perfection of Godhead. Some have considered the titles Christ, and Son of God, as equal and convertible; but the distinction in the use of them, as pointed out in our examination of the charges brought against the Redeemer, shows the error of this opinion. When Saul at Damascus,[1] and Apollos in Achaia,[2] preached to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, the aim was to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah, long expected by their nation. But when Saul preached "Christ, that he is the Son of God,"[3] and when the eunuch professed his faith, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,"[4] more than the mere messiahship of Jesus is manifestly intended. Christ or Messiah is a title of office: but the phrase "Son of God," denotes, not the mere office, but the exalted nature which qualified for it.

The possession of proper deity is alone sufficient to show that the Son of God was glorious and happy eternally; but we may learn the same truth from the language of Scripture directly referring to this subject. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was."[5] "For ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."[6] "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always

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[1] Acts ix. 22. [2] Acts xviii. 28. [3] Acts ix. 20.
[4] Acts viii. 37. [5] John xvii. 5. [6] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

before him."[1] "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."[2] "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father."[3] The full communion of the Son with the Father, in all the glory and blessedness of the Godhead, is to be inferred from these passages.

Section II.—HUMILIATION.

THE SON OF GOD ASSUMED HUMAN NATURE, AND IN THAT NATURE LIVED A LIFE OF TOIL AND SORROW, AND DIED AN IGNOMINIOUS AND PAINFUL DEATH.[4]

The full history of this wonderful humiliation, is given by the four Evangelists; and is often referred to in the New Testament, and sometimes in the prophetic declarations of the Old.

In contemplating this mystery of "God manifest in the flesh," we are not to suppose that the divine nature underwent any real change. God cannot cease to be God. The change was in the manifestation, and not in the nature. In this manifestation, even the angels were concerned, for it is a part of the mystery that "God manifest in the flesh" was "seen of angels;"[5] but so wonderful was this new mode of manifestation, that the angels could not readily know their God, in this humble form, as the babe of Bethlehem, and the man of sorrows. Hence, they needed a special command from the eternal throne, before they could render him divine worship: "When he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.'"[6] But this fact, it may be objected, shows it to have been a concealment, rather than a manifestation. This, to some extent, is true; but it is a concealment resembling that by which God showed himself to Moses in the cleft of the rock, concealing the beams of insufferable brightness, that the favored servant might see the back parts of his glory. So the angels, while they behold the Godhead veiled in human nature, obtain views of the divine glory, which would otherwise have been impossible. These are the things "into which the angels desire to look."[7] "Unto the principalities and powers

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[1] Prov. viii. 30. [2] Phil. ii. 6. [3] John i. 18.
[4] 2 Cor. viii. 9. [5] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [6] Heb. i. 6.
[7] 1 Pet. i. 12.

in heavenly places, might be known by the Church."—by the redemption and salvation of the Church, through the humiliation and death of Christ,—"the manifold wisdom of God."[1]

The lowest point of Christ's humiliation, was his death by crucifixion, and his being held for a time under the power of death, as a prisoner in the grave. Some have thought that he descended into hell; but this opinion has arisen from misinterpretation of the Scripture, "It was said, Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell:"[2] but the word "hell" signifies in this place, as it does in many others, the unseen world, or the state of departed spirits. When it is said, "He went and preached unto the spirits in prison,"[3] the meaning is, that he, by his spirit, in the ministry of Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, preached to the antediluvians, who, being disobedient, and rejecting the ministry, were swept away by the flood, and were, when these words were penned, spirits in prison.

The glorious benefits resulting to us from the deep humiliation of Christ, are intimated in the words of Paul: "that ye through his poverty might be rich."[4] The extent of the riches which we shall acquire by his poverty, eternity must disclose.

Section III.—EXALTATION.

THE SON OF GOD, IN HUMAN NATURE, WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, ASCENDED TO HEAVEN, AND WAS INVESTED WITH SUPREME DOMINION OVER ALL CREATURES.[5]

The facts of Christ's exaltation, like those of his humiliation, are related in the Scripture narrative, and referred to in various parts of the sacred volume.

The exaltation, like the humiliation, produced no real change in his divine nature. It affected the manifestation of it, and also wrought a real change in the condition of the human nature. This nature is now perfectly happy. Jesus has received the joy that was set before him;[6] and saints, who are to be happy with

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[1] Eph. iii. 10. [2] Ps. xvi. 10. [3] 1 Pet. iii. 19.
[4] 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[5] Matt. xxviii.; Mark xvi.; Luke xxiv.; John xx.; Acts i. 11; vii. 56; ix. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 4–8; Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.
[6] Heb. xii. 2.

him for ever, are said to "enter into the joy of their Lord."[1] On this nature rests, also, the full glory of the Godhead, "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."[2] As through him the brightest manifestations of the divine glory are made to intelligent creatures, so through him they receive the commands of supreme authority. "He is head of principalities and powers." "He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."[3]

The glory to which Christ has been exalted, is not a subject of idle speculation, in which we have no interest. In his address to his Father, he said, in allusion to his disciples, "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them."[4] Hence, while we suffer with Christ,[5] and for Christ, in this world, we may rejoice in the hope of being glorified with him.

CHAPTER III.

OFFICES OF CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN.[6]

A mediator is a middle person between two parties. The term is especially applied to one who interposes between parties at variance, with a view to effect a reconciliation. Men are under the displeasure of God, on account of their sins, and are in rebellion against him, and enemies in mind by wicked works. Christ appears as mediator, to effect a reconciliation.

The duty of a mediator differs, according to the relation of the parties. When the variance between them arises wholly from misunderstanding, an explanation is all that is necessary to effect a reconciliation. In this case a mediator is simply an interpreter.

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[1] Matt. xxv. 21. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [3] Eph. i. 20, 21.
[4] John xvii. 22. [5] Rom. viii. 17.
[6] 1 Tim. ii. 5; 2 Cor. v. 18; Col. i. 20; 1 John ii. 1; Gal. i. 4; iii. 13; Tit. ii. 14.

When an offence has been given, but such a one as may be pardoned on mere entreaty, the mediator becomes an intercessor. But when the circumstances are such as to require satisfaction for the offence, the mediator must render that satisfaction or become surety for the offender. On God's part, as he has committed no wrong, nothing more is required than an Interpreter,[1] to show to man his uprightness. But, on the part of guilty man, it is necessary that the Mediator should be both Intercessor and Surety.

The union of two natures in Christ qualifies him for the work of mediation. As man, he sympathizes with us, is accessible, both when we desire to present petitions and to receive instruction; and he is capable of standing as our substitute or surety, and of making the requisite satisfaction to divine justice. As God, he understands fully the claims against us, has ready access to the offended Sovereign, has all the knowledge which it can be necessary to communicate to us, and can give dignity and value to the satisfaction offered in our behalf. These qualifications are found in no other person, and accordingly "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."[2]

In the one office of Mediator three offices are included, which need separate consideration: those of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Section I.—PROPHET.

Jesus Christ, as Prophet, makes revelation from God to men.[3]

Among the revelations made by prophets, the foretelling of future events has held a conspicuous place: but this does not constitute the whole of the office. The word prophesy does not always refer to future events, as is apparent from an incident in the injurious treatment which our Redeemer received at his trial. When blindfolded he was struck by one of the attendants, who contemptuously demanded, "Prophesy who is he that smote thee."[4] From this example we learn that the term was not exclusively used

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[1] Job xxxiii. 23. [2] Acts iv. 12.

[3] Isaiah lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18, 23; Heb. ii. 3; 1 Pet. i. 11; Deut. xviii. 18; John iii. 34; xvi. 1; Rev. i. 1.

[4] Matt. xxvi. 68.

for the foretelling of future events, but was applied to the making of any declaration which required superhuman knowledge.

Jesus Christ, as a Prophet, was superior to all other prophets. Moses was so far distinguished above the rest, that it was said no prophet had arisen like him;[1] but Moses foretold the coming of Jesus Christ, in these words: "The Lord, thy God, will raise up unto thee, a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."[2] Elijah was a prophet, highly distinguished in his day, and was translated to heaven, without tasting death: but Moses and Elijah appeared on the mount of transfiguration, to lay down their prophetical office and honors at the feet of Jesus, when the voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him."[3] Moses and Elijah were to be heard in their day; but the voice from the excellent glory singled out Jesus as the superior prophet, whose instructions we are commanded to receive.

Not only was Christ superior to the prophets of the former dispensation, but it was he who qualified them for their office, and spoke through them."[4] This fact accords with his statement, "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."[5] He is, in this view, the only Prophet, the only Revealer of the mind of God. Before his personal ministry commenced, he made revelation by prophets whom he inspired; during his ministry, he spoke as one from the bosom of the Father; and after he left the world, he continued to make revelation, through his apostles and others, to whom he gave his Spirit. The last book of the Bible is a revelation which he gave to his servant John;[6] and the whole Bible is now to us as the word of Christ. His truth he still uses, as the Prophet of the Church, instructing his people into the knowledge of God.

God has sometimes been pleased to make known his will by the ministry of angels; but the prophets, whom he ordinarily employed, were men of like passions with ourselves. There was peculiar fitness, as well as condescending kindness, that the great Prophet of the Church should be one in our own nature. Though

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 10. [2] Deut. xviii. 15. [3] Matt. xvii. 5.
[4] 1 Pet. i. 11. [5] John i. 18. [6] Rev. i. 1.

it was true, "Never man spake like this man,"[1] it was still true, that he spoke with the voice of a man; and, instead of the terrific thunders heard from Sinai, addressed those who were willing to receive his instructions, in the accents of tenderness, as an affectionate friend. But such affection might have existed, without the knowledge necessary to make known the whole mind of God. This qualification his divine nature supplied. Paul asks, on one occasion, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? and who hath been his counsellor?[2] But, it had been predicted of Jesus, that he should be called Wonderful, Counsellor.[3] He was the wisdom of God, from the bosom of the Father, and was therefore fully qualified to reveal the mind and counsel of God to men.

At the feet of this Prophet let us sit, that we may learn the knowledge of God. With Mary, let us take our place there, leaving the cumbering cares of the world, and opening our ears and our hearts to receive his heavenly instructions. Peter, James, and John, who saw his glorious form in the holy mount, when the bright vision had passed away, were left in possession of the divine command: "Hear ye him." Let us take this direction as the guide of our way, until we shall be admitted to the brighter vision of his glory, of which the former was but a shadow.

Section II.—PRIEST.

Jesus Christ, as Priest, made an efficacious sacrifice for the sins of his people, intercedes for them at the right hand of God, and blesses them with all spiritual blessings.[4]

A prophet approaches men with revelations from God; but a priest approaches God in behalf of men. His chief business is to offer sacrifice, and make intercession. Priests have existed in the various religions of the heathen world; but in the forms of worship instituted by divine authority for the observance of the Hebrew nation, we find the most instructive exposition of the priestly

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[1] John vii. 46. [2] Romans xi. 34. [3] Isaiah ix. 6.

[4] Ps. cx. 4; Zech. vi. 13; Heb. iv. 14, 15; v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 24, 26; viii. 1; ix. 11, 12, 14, 26; x. 12, 14; Isaiah liii. 5, 7, 12; John i. 29; x. 15; 1 Cor. v. 7; Eph. v. 2; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ix. 26; x. 5; xiii. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18; 1 John i. 7; Rev. v. 9; vii. 14; Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25; ix. 24.

office. The Epistle to the Hebrews explains the design of this institution, and sets forth the Levitical priests as types of Christ in his priesthood. It is there stated to be the duty of the priest to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.[1]

The text last quoted refers to two kinds of offerings which the priest presented: one for thanksgiving, the other for propitiation. Various offerings were prescribed as expressions of gratitude for mercies received, and others to make atonement for sins. Christians make their offerings of praise and thanksgiving through Christ, as their high priest; but the only atoning sacrifice is the offering which he made of himself, when he gave his life a ransom for us.[2]

All propitiatory sacrifices involve the idea of substitution. The animal offered represented the offerer, and bore his sins, which were confessed, over its head.[3] So Christ bore our sins,[4] our iniquities being laid on him. With reference to the use of lambs in sacrifice, he is called "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."[5] The idea of substitution is clearly conveyed in such passages as these: "For a good man some would dare to die; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[6] "He who knew no sin was made sin for us."[7]

Those who deny the divinity of Christ, deny also the doctrine of his vicarious sacrifice. When he is said in Scripture to die for us, they understand the import of the language to be, that he died for our benefit; but they exclude the idea of his suffering in our stead, bearing the penalty due to our sins, that we might be released from it. He is supposed to have died for our benefit, in that he gave us an example of patience and resignation in suffering, confirmed the doctrine that he taught, and, by rising from the dead, established the truth of the soul's immortality, and the resurrection of the body. These several benefits, all will admit, are derived from the death and resurrection of Christ: but they do not fully come up to the import of the strong language which the Scriptures employ in relation to this subject. The ancient mar-

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[1] Heb. v. 1.
[2] Matt. xx. 28.
[3] Lev. xvi. 21.
[4] 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[5] John i. 29.
[6] Romans v. 8.
[7] 2 Cor. v. 21.

tyrs generally set us a noble example of patience and resignation in suffering and death. Many of them exhibited a fortitude and triumph in the prospect of their dying agonies, not seen in the example of our Redeemer. In the garden, his soul was exceedingly sorrowful in the prospect of his sufferings, and he thrice prayed that the cup might pass from him; and, on the cross, though he was all submissive to his Father, and yielded his spirit at last into his Father's hands, yet he exhibited none of that joyful exultation which has often shone forth in the martyr's last moments, but he seemed oppressed, shrouded in gloom, and mourning the withdrawal of his Father's presence. All this may be accounted for, if we consider that his death was unlike that of the martyrs, because he endured in it the wrath of the Father, due to our transgressions. If his death had been merely to set us an example, it might be said, with greater propriety, that Peter, Paul, and other Christian martyrs, died for us: but Paul will not admit this; for he says, in a manner which implies a strong denial, "Was Paul crucified for you?"[1]

The sincerity of the ancient Christians was demonstrated by their readiness to suffer and die, rather than renounce the faith which they professed. Christ's death may be said to confirm his sincerity in the same way; but if this is what is meant by his dying for us, Stephen, James, Peter, and Paul died for us in this sense. But though the death of Jesus may be understood to establish his sincerity for the confirmation of his doctrine, he was accustomed to refer, for this purpose, not to his death, but to his miraculous works and his resurrection. It was his resurrection also, rather than his death, which established the truth of the soul's immortality and of the resurrection of the body. If, therefore, these confirmations of truth for our benefit are what is intended by Christ's dying for us, it would be more correct to say, that he wrought miracles and rose from the dead for us. But his death has so prominent a place in the Scriptures, as that to which we are indebted for eternal life, that we are compelled to seek for a higher sense of the phrase, "Christ died for us."

The humble disciple of Jesus, who is willing to learn, as a little child, in what sense his Lord and Master died for him, needs only

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[1] 1 Cor. i. 13.

to read with attention the passages of Scripture which have been quoted, and which fully establish the doctrine, that Christ's death was an atoning sacrifice for our sins. This doctrine is essential to Christianity. It is the grand peculiarity of the Christian scheme. Hence Paul determined to know nothing but "Christ crucified,"[1] to glory in nothing but "the cross of Christ."[2] The gospel was the preaching of Christ crucified.[3] It was a stumbling block to the self-righteous Jews, and foolishness to the philosophical Greeks; but to those who received it to the salvation of their souls, it was Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.[4] It was not Christ transfigured on Mount Tabor; not Christ stilling the tempest, and raising the dead; not Christ rising triumphantly from the grave, and ascending gloriously, amidst shouts of attendant angels, to his throne in the highest heavens: but Christ on the cross, expiring in darkness and woe, that the first preachers of the Gospel delighted to exhibit to the faith of their hearers. This was their Gospel; its centre, and its glory. It was faith in this Gospel that controlled the hearts of their converts, and made them ready to die for him who had, by his death, procured for them eternal life. In this faith they exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."[5] To this they referred when they said, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."[6]

The doctrine of Christ's atoning sacrifice explains the Old Testament dispensation. To what purpose were its victims brought to the altar, and the rites of its worship all stained with blood? Was God really pleased with the slaughter of animals, and the smell of their sacrifice? Paul has explained, that these were a shadow of good things to come;[7] but the body is of Christ. As mere types of Christ's atoning sacrifice, they are intelligible. This they prefigured. "Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us; an offering and a sacrifice to God of sweet smelling savor;"[8] and it was only because of their reference to this sacrifice,

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[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2. [2] Gal. vi. 14. [3] 1 Cor. i. 23.
[4] Rom. i. 16. [5] Gal. vi. 14. [6] Gal. ii. 20.
[7] Heb. x. 1. [8] Eph. v. 2.

that the sacrifices of the preceding times were acceptable to the Lord.

The general prevalence of sacrifices, in the religions of the world, is a fact which it is difficult to account for. If it be supposed to arise from principles implanted in human nature, it will furnish a strong argument to prove that human nature has ever felt, and must feel, the necessity for such a sacrifice as is made by the death of Christ. If the prevalence of sacrifices be accounted for by tracing them to an ancient institution, given to our race by revelation from God, an argument, still stronger in favor of our doctrine, is furnished by the fact. It appears, from this view of the subject, that the institution is not only more ancient than the laws of Moses, but has come down from the time when Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.[1] As this sacrifice, like all subsequent ones which were offered by faith, had reference to the sacrifice of Christ, the whole institution of sacrifice bears testimony to it.

The sacrifice of Christ, which is the object of Christian faith on earth, will be the song of glorified saints in heaven. The Lamb, in the midst of the throne, will appear in their view, not as once honored and powerful, but as having been made a sacrifice, "a lamb that had been slain."[2] He was once the victim on the sacrificial altar, but he will be the object of adoration in the everlasting song, "Unto him that loved us,"[3] &c.

When the birth of Jesus was announced by the angel, it was said, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."[4] This was the grand design of his coming into the world: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."[5] To effect this salvation, a sacrifice was demanded; and, that he might make the required sacrifice, it was necessary that he should assume human nature: "When he cometh into the world, he saith: Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."[6] "It was necessary that this man have somewhat to offer."[7] His humanity was the victim laid on the altar, for which reason it is said, "He bore our sins in his own body, on the tree."[8] "The Captain of our salvation must be made

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[1] Heb. xi. 4.
[2] Rev. v. 6.
[3] Rev. i. 5.
[4] Matt. i. 21.
[5] Luke xix. 10.
[6] Heb. x. 5.
[7] Heb. viii. 3.
[8] 1 Pet. ii. 24.

perfect through suffering;"[1] and he must, therefore, have a nature capable of suffering: "For this cause, he was made lower than the angels, that, for the suffering of death, he might be crowned with glory and honor."[2] There is, doubtless, also a peculiar fitness in the arrangement, by which the Redeemer is the near-kinsman of the redeemed; and the sacrifice made in the nature that had sinned. Had the Son of God undertaken the salvation of angels, there would have been a fitness in his taking on him the nature of angels: but as he came to save men, he took on him human nature, and was made in all points like his brethren.[3]

While the fact of the sacrifice depended on the assumption of a nature capable of suffering, the undertaking of the work, the efficacy of the sacrifice, the power to lay down his life, and the power to take it again, depended on the divine nature of Christ. The divine nature, alone, could not be made under the law: and the human nature, alone, could not have originally consented to be made under the law; and would not thereby, had it been possible, have exhibited any humiliation, any voluntary impoverishing of himself, that we might be made rich. The question has sometimes been proposed, how much obedience did the human nature of Jesus Christ owe for itself, and how much did it render for the benefit of others? but this is a useless question, and is asked on a mistaken apprehension of the facts concerning Christ's assumption of our nature. The man Christ Jesus never had an existence separate from the divine nature. The Word did not enter into flesh previously existing; but "the Word was made flesh."[4] Had the Word entered into a previously existing man, we might conceive of the obligations which that man had previously owed to the law, and the continuance of those obligations. But the Son of God was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.[5] As the obligations were assumed for their benefit, the whole fulfilment of them must have been for their benefit. As the assumption of human nature was designed for the salvation of his people, all that he did and suffered in that nature, is to be viewed as a part of the great design, and constituting a part of the work.

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[1] Heb. ii. 10. [2] Heb. ii. 9. [3] Heb. ii. 16, 17.
[4] John i. 14. [5] Gal. iv. 5.

We are not permitted to suppose that the divine nature of Jesus Christ could, in itself, endure the sufferings necessary to make atonement, or that it did, in the proper sense, suffer with the human nature. We cannot conceive that the perfect blessedness of God can consist with the endurance of suffering, any more than we can conceive the divine immensity shut up within the limits of a human body. Yet we are authorized to conclude, that whatever Jesus did or suffered, does, in some manner, represent to us the mind of God. To think God to be altogether such an one as ourselves,[1] is a gross and sinful view of him, which he resents: but we are, nevertheless, compelled to form our conceptions of his mind from the knowledge which we have of our own. This mode of conception his word authorizes. The pity of a father for his children, is made by God himself the image in which we are to see his pity for those who fear him.[2] Pity, as exercised by human beings, may be a very painful emotion; but, when we attribute it to God, we must conceive of it as posesssing all that is excellent in human pity, but without the imperfection of pain. So, the mind of the holy Jesus exhibits to us the mind of God. The pity which he felt, however painful it may have been to his human soul, is an image in which we are permitted to see the compassion of God. Could we have before our contemplation all the affections and emotions that the holy soul of Jesus ever experienced, we might learn therein more of the mind of God than is otherwise discoverable: and if we understood the affections and emotions of which he was the subject in his last hours, we should probably understand, better than in any other way, how the divine perfections were concerned in his atoning sufferings. It is our duty to look to Jesus, who endured the cross,[3] and to study his character, that the same mind may be in us, and we feel the stronger obligation to study with what mind he suffered death; because Paul prayed to have fellowship with his sufferings, and to be conformed to his death.[4]

What, then, were the emotions of Jesus in his last sufferings? When he consented to make the sacrifice in the body prepared for him, he said, "Thy law is within my heart."[5] He doubtless

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[1] Ps. l. 21. [2] Ps. ciii. 13. [3] Heb. xii. 2.
[4] Phil. iii. 10. [5] Ps. xl. 8.

retained this law in his heart, through his intensest agony, and approved it, even while he was undergoing its dire penalty. In this particular Paul had fellowship with him, for he could say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man."[1] When Jesus bore our sins in his body on the tree, it is reasonable to suppose that his human soul had a sense of the great evil of sin; otherwise we cannot understand how it should approve the law under which he was suffering the penalty for sin. Whatever other emotions had a place in his mind, we are authorized to conclude that he had a deep sense of the evil of the sins which he bore, and of the excellence of the law which those sins opposed. While love, stronger than death, identified him with his people, who were under the sentence of the violated law, he loved also that law with all his heart. These contending affections painfully struggled together in his breast. The sins of his people were not offences which he had personally committed; and therefore remorse, in the proper sense, was not an ingredient in his suffering. But an affectionate husband, who loves his wife as his own flesh, would, when grieving for a crime which she has committed, feel nearly the same agony as if he had personally committed it; so, when Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, he felt the sins of the Church as if they had been his own. In this sense of the evil of sin, which was an element in the sufferings of Jesus, it was lawful for Paul to desire fellowship with him. The Scripture teaches that Jesus offered himself to God, through the eternal Spirit.[2] This Spirit produces love to God and his law in the hearts of believers, and gives them a sense of the evil of sin; in both which particulars they have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. Now, if we suppose that the Spirit, which was given to Christ without measure, opened to his view, when hanging on the cross, the full glory of the divine law which the Church, his bride, had violated; and the full enormity of the sins which his people had committed; what intense agony would these discoveries produce! No agony of the deepest penitence could surpass it. Yet all this Jesus probably felt; and in all this we may well pray to have fellowship with him.

If the view which we have taken, gives us any just insight into the emotions which rent the holy soul of Jesus, when he hung on

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[1] Rom. vii. 22. [2] Heb. ix. 14.

the cross for us, it should make us feel, deeply feel, the moral power of that cross. To think as he thought, and feel as he felt, is enough to constrain us to live to him who died for us. No higher motive to holiness can be needed, than that which proceeds from the cross.

The denial of Christ's divinity, and that of his atonement, consistently accompany each other. We should have little need of a divine person, to fulfil the offices ascribed to Christ, if that of making an efficacious sacrifice for sin be not included. The system in which these two cardinal doctrines are omitted, is another gospel, which Paul, and the first ministers of the Christian religion, knew not; and which cannot meet the necessities of lost men. It is worthy of special remark, that the two positive institutions of Christianity—baptism and the Lord's supper, refer to these two doctrines, and silently and significantly preach them. In baptism, we devote ourselves to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; acknowledging the divinity and authority of each person in the Godhead: and the divinity of the second person is more especially acknowledged in those brief accounts of baptism, in which persons are said to have been baptised in the name of Christ. In the Lord's supper, the doctrine of atonement is clearly set forth. "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."[1] The two ordinances have, from the days of the apostles, been observed by the great body of professing Christians; though their form and use have not been kept pure, as they were originally delivered, and the two doctrines which they set forth, have been maintained in the great body of Christian professors, in all ages; though accompanied with much corruption.

The Scriptures plainly teach that the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ was necessary to render the justification of a sinner consistent with the justice of God. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."[2]

Had it not been absolutely necessary, we cannot account for it, that God should have inflicted such suffering, or even permitted it

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[1] Matt. xxvi. 28.

[2] Rom. iii. 25, 26.

to fall, on his beloved Son, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." The death of Christ, if he was not a divine person, was, as we have before shown, the effect of perjury and suicidal prevarication on his part; and if it was not an atoning sacrifice indispensably necessary to satisfy divine justice, it is difficult to show that it was not, on the part of the Father, a display of injustice and cruelty towards the Son of his love. Why was his ear deaf to the thrice-repeated petition, "Let this cup pass from me"? Why had the sorrows of Gethsemane, and the bloody sweat of the agonized, but innocent, sufferer, no effect to move the pity of the Father, to whom Christ had said: "I know that thou hearest me always."[1] The resigned language of the suffering Jesus, and the condition on which he bases the petition, furnish the answer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."[2]

Whatever views of propriety may be entertained by short-sighted mortals, it is manifestly the teaching of sacred Scripture, that God could not, consistently with his justice, forgive our sins on our mere asking, or even on our penitential acknowledgments. We are required to forgive offences till seventy times seven, when a brother acknowledges his trespass; but sins against God are not private offences, to be remitted in the same manner. A judge who should pardon a criminal, that, according to law, ought to be condemned, and turn him loose on the community, would be false to his sacred office. So God sustains the character of a righteous Judge; and, sooner than disregard the claims of law, and overthrow his moral government, he is willing to plunge the sword of justice into the heart of his beloved Son. And such is the reverence of the Son, for the law of his Father and the claims of justice, that he patiently consents to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, that his death may justify God in forgiving and saving the guilty.

How the death of Christ rendered full satisfaction to divine justice, is a question which we shall have occasion to consider, under the head of Justification.

Those who oppose the doctrine of atonement, have viewed it as inconsistent with justice, that the innocent should suffer for the guilty. Their views, however, are plainly at variance with those

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[1] John xi. 42. [2] Matt. xxvi. 39.

which are presented in the Book of God. "He suffered, the just for the unjust."[1] "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."[2] Even in human affairs, sureties are allowed to pay the debts of others; and, with reference to this well-known arrangement among men, Christ is called the surety of the better covenant.[3] To render such suretyship consistent with justice, his voluntary consent must be given, and he must have had a perfect right to dispose of himself. The right he possessed, because of his divinity; and the consent was given in the covenant of grace which he made with the Father.

A part of the priest's office consisted in making intercession for the people. The high priest did this in a special manner, when he went into the holy of holies. Jesus interceded, when he prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail; and when he poured forth to his Father the beautiful prayer recorded in John xvii. But now, in the holy of holies, the immediate presence of God, he ever liveth to make intercession for us.[4] How that intercession is carried on, we cannot undertake to explain. What his mode of asking is, we know not; but in some mode, he asks, and the heathen are given to him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.[5] In some mode, while he sympathises with his suffering followers on earth, he asks grace for them, to help them in their trials and sorrows, and his intercession prevails.

The remaining part of the priest's office consisted in blessing the people.[6] The high priest did this, on his return from the holy of holies. This, also, our great High Priest will do, in the most public manner, when he shall return from the heavens which he has entered, and meet his people in the great congregation at the last judgment. It is of little importance, whether we refer this act of blessing to the priestly or the kingly office of Christ. It was anciently said, that the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.[7] Yet we refer Christ's teaching to his prophetical, rather than to his priestly office. So, though the ancient priests blessed the people, yet, as the priest's

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[1] 1 Pet. iii. 18. [2] 2 Cor. v. 21. [3] Heb. vii. 22.
[4] Heb. vii. 25. [5] Ps. ii. 8. [6] Num. vi. 22–27.
[7] Mal. ii. 7.

office was to approach God, in behalf of men; rather than to approach men with either revelations or blessings from God; we may consider the blessings conferred on the obedient subjects of Christ's reign, as the bestowments of his royal munificence; and, therefore, as appertaining to his kingly office. This accords with the language of Scripture: "Then shall the King say: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.'"[1] But all Christ's offices yield blessings to his people; and were undertaken by him for their sake.

Section III.—KING.

Jesus Christ, as the mediator between God and men, exercises kingly authority over all creatures, to the glory of God, and the good of his people.[2]

The superscription which Pilate placed on the cross, was, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." This writing expressed a truth of which its author was not aware. Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, foretold by the Hebrew prophets, and expected by the nation as the king who would rule over them, and raise them to great prosperity.

The Hebrew word Messiah, to which the Greek word Christ corresponds, signifies the Anointed. When kings and priests were introduced into office among the Israelites, it was usual to anoint them with oil. We have one example, in which a prophet was set apart to his work, by the same ceremony.[3] Jesus was the Anointed, because he sustained all these offices; and, although he was not introduced into either of them, by a literal anointing with oil, he had the unction of the Holy Spirit, of which the literal unction with oil was a type. The words of Isaiah, read by him in the synagogue of Nazareth, were applied to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach,"[4] &c. Here the anointing must be understood as referring to his prophetical office. The same reference seems to have been made with taunt and derision by the individual who smote Jesus, and said:

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[1] Matt. xxv. 34.

[2] Num. xxiv. 17; Ps. ii. 6; Isaiah xxxii. 1; Zech. ix. 9; Matt. xxi. 5; John xviii. 36; Matt. xxv. 34; Heb. ii. 9; Rev. v. 13; 1 Tim. vi. 15; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16; Eph. i. 20–23; v. 23; Phil. ii. 9, 10.

[3] 1 Kings xix. 16. [4] Isaiah lxi. 1.

"Prophesy, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"[1] In this taunt, it was implied, that the Christ was expected to be a prophet. But from the common use of anointing, we are led to refer the term Christ rather to the priestly and kingly offices, with which Jesus was invested. The most common reference, is to his kingly office. He was reported to Pilate, as making himself "Christ, a king."[2] In expecting their Messiah, the Jews looked for a king, who was to rule over them and deliver them from their enemies. Many of the prophecies concerning the Christ, relate to his reign as king over Israel: and when he, before the Jewish council, claimed to be the Christ, he referred to the future manifestation of his kingly power and glory, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."[3]

A proof that Jesus was the promised Messiah, is found in the fact, that the prophecies were fulfilled in him. The time and place of his birth, and the tribe and family from which he was to spring, were particularly foretold; and the events corresponded to the predictions. Many prophecies of events in his life, sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, were exactly fulfilled. Jesus appealed with confidence to the Scriptures, for proof of his claims: "Search the Scriptures; for they are they that testify of me."[4] And the apostles said: "To him give all the prophets witness."[5]

Further proof that Jesus was the Christ, is furnished by the testimony of John the Baptist,[6] by the voice of the Father at his baptism,[7] and at his transfiguration in the mount;[8] by his works, to which he often appealed in proof of his claim; and by his claim itself, which was made repeatedly during his ministry; and finally before the Jewish council, and before Pilate, and which was sustained by his miracles, and ultimately by his resurrection from the dead.

To all these proofs it may be added, that the Jews have found no other Messiah. They have confidently expected one, and the time for his coming has long passed. Either Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah foretold, or the prophecies were false, and the religion of which they were a part was not from God.

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[1] Matt. xxvi. 68.
[2] Luke xxiii. 2.
[3] Luke xxii. 69.
[4] John v. 39.
[5] Acts x. 43.
[6] John iii. 28.
[7] Matt. iii. 17
[8] Matt. xvii. 5.

Jesus Christ, as the Supreme God, had, of original right, sovereign authority over all creatures. But when the Word was made flesh, he took on him the form of a servant; and, for a time, appeared divested of divine power and glory. But, after having humbled himself, and completed the service for which his humiliation was necessary, it pleased God to reward that service by exalting him to supreme authority over all creatures. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."[1]

A peculiarity of Christ's dominion as Mediator, is, that it is exercised by him in human nature. Why it was the pleasure of God to exalt human nature to a dignity so high, it is impossible for us fully to comprehend. We see in it the complete defeat of Satan, the apostate angel, who aimed to bring our inferior nature entirely under his power. He triumphed over the first Adam: but the second Adam has triumphed over him, and will bring him into complete subjection, with all the hostile powers that he has set in array; and will, in the very nature over which Satan triumphed, bring them into subjection under his feet. This dominion over principalities and powers Jesus Christ exercises, with a reference to the good of his people, redeemed from among men. To secure this benefit, the exercise of his dominion in human nature doubtless contributes. The redeemed are one with him, as he is one with the Father. That wonderful prayer is fulfilled, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."[2] They are admitted to a communion with God, far more intimate and glorious than could otherwise be enjoyed; and are exalted to such honor, that they are said to reign with Christ. This dignity is nowhere ascribed to angels. Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This exercise of divine authority, through the human nature of Jesus Christ, will manifest the glory of God in its richest displays; and angels and men will here learn, through eternal ages, the perfections of the divine nature, and will for ever admire and adore, with ineffable joy.

Another peculiarity of this dominion, is, that it opens a new dispensation to rebellious men. When the angels, that kept not their

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[1] Matt. xxviii. 18. [2] John xvii. 21.

first estate, sinned against God, they were driven from his presence, and condemned to hopeless woe. No mediator was provided for them; and no gospel of salvation was ever proclaimed in their ears. Such an administration of divine authority, as gives hope of pardon to offenders, was unknown in the government of the world until man sinned; and this administration constitutes a distinguishing feature of Christ's mediatorial reign. Hence, he is the Mediator between God and men, and not between God and angels; and hence the Mediator is emphatically called "the man Christ Jesus."[1] On earth, the Son of man had power to forgive sins;[2] and in heaven he sits on a throne of grace, to which we are permitted and invited to come, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. When God displayed his glory to Moses, and proclaimed his name in the hearing of that favored servant, his forgiving mercy had a conspicuous place in the revelation: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering,"[3] &c. So, in heaven, where his full glory is seen, the dispensation of his mercy from the throne of grace on which the exalted Mediator sits, constitutes the most lovely and attractive exhibition of the divine glory that the happy worshippers are permitted to behold.

Of the two peculiarities which have been mentioned as distinguishing the mediatorial dominion of Christ, the first could not exist until the humanity of Christ was exalted to the throne. Then the mediatorial reign, in its full development, commenced, when the Father said, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."[4] But the second peculiarity existed in an incomplete administration of this mediatorial reign, which was exercised from the time of man's fall. Before the efficacious sacrifice for sin was made, in which the humanity of Christ became the victim, the merits of that sacrifice were anticipated; and, through its virtue, pardons were bestowed on believers, from the days of Abel. It is now made known to us, that these pardons were bestowed through the second person in the Godhead, who had engaged, as the surety for sinners, to do the work which he has since performed: and the inquiries of angels, and the faith of Old Testament saints, were all directed forward to the coming of Christ,

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[1] 1 Tim. ii. 5.
[2] Matt. ix. 6.
[3] Ex. xxxiv. 6.
[4] Ps. cx. 1.

for explanation of that mysterious dispensation by which rebels obtained mercy.

Jesus Christ is head over all things to the Church. He exercises his supreme authority for the benefit of his people, for whose sake he sanctified himself to undertake the work of mediation. He is head over principalities and powers; and angels honor and obey him, and are sent forth as ministering spirits, to minister to the heirs of salvation. He is Lord over all the earth; and regulates every agent and every event in the world, so that "all things work together for good to them that love God." If Christ is ours, all things are ours; for all things are in his hands, and he holds them for the benefit of his people.

In the few words which Jesus spoke respecting his kingdom, when he stood before Pilate, the most important instruction is conveyed. We cannot too much admire the wisdom with which he accurately described, in so few words, the kingdom that he came to establish: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight."[1] The kings of the earth maintain their authority by force. The coerced obedience which they procure, is often reluctantly rendered. The proper subjects of Christ's kingdom are a willing people,[2] who voluntarily give themselves up to his authority, and serve him with delight. In extending his kingdom he has not allowed carnal weapons to be used; but such only as are powerful, through God, to bring the heart into subjection: "Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice."[3] He who receives the truth, hears the voice of the king, and acknowledges his authority. To believe the truth, is to obey the Gospel; and this is to be subject to Christ as king. The Jews had expected the Messiah to set up a kingdom, which would be like the kingdoms of the earth, and surpass them in glory. The disciples of Jesus entertained similar views; and hence arose the request to sit on his right hand, and on his left, in his kingdom. Hence, too, arose their despondency when they saw him crucified. They had thought that it was he who was to restore the kingdom to Israel;[4] and his death darkened their prospects, and cut off their hopes. The faith of the expiring thief recognised

[1] John xviii. 36.
[2] Ps. cx. 3.
[3] John xviii. 37.
[4] Luke xxiv. 21; Acts i. 6.

the expiring Jesus as king; and prayed, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom:"[1] but the mourning disciples of Jesus could not see the bright prospect of his kingdom, through the darkness of the grave. Yet, the death of Jesus was necessary to the establishment of his kingdom: "For obedience unto death, he was crowned with glory and honor."[2] And the dying love of Christ is the constraining power which brings the heart into subjection to his authority.

Wrong views respecting the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, have been productive of much evil. The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory, because they could not recognize him in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and not to introduce his kingdom with the pomp which the carnal mind is pleased with. And Christ has been crucified afresh, and put to open shame, by his professed followers, because of their wrong notions respecting his kingdom. A visible ecclesiastical organization, distinguished by the observance of external forms, has claimed to be the kingdom of Christ; and its power has been extended and wielded by means far different from those which Jesus authorized. To banish this corrupt Christianity from the earth, correct views respecting the kingdom of Christ must prevail.

The Messiah was to rule in the midst of his enemies; and his iron sceptre was to break in pieces, as a potter's vessel,[3] all who are disobedient, and do not obey the truth: but those who obey the truth are "the children of the kingdom;" and to them the benefits and blessings of his reign belong. In this restricted sense, none but regenerate persons enter into his kingdom.[4] We are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son,[5] when we receive his truth into our hearts. In this sense, no profession of religion, and no observance of external forms, can bring any one into the kingdom of Christ. The tares may resemble the wheat: but the tares are the children of the wicked one; and the good seed only are the children of the kingdom;[6] and when the Son of man shall gather out of his kingdom whatever is offensive to him, the tares will, equally with the briars and thorns, be rejected, as not belong-

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[1] Luke xxiii. 42. [2] Phil. ii. 8, 9; Heb. ii. 9. [3] Ps. ii 9.
[4] John iii. 5. [5] Col. i. 13. [6] Matt. xiii. 38.

ing properly to his kingdom, and doomed to be burned. Let it then be distinctly understood, that the kingdom of Christ is not a great visible organization, consisting of good men and bad, who are bound together by some ecclesiastical tie. He rules over all; but he accounts all as the enemies of his reign who do not obey the truth: and the hypocrite and formalist have no more part in his kingdom than Herod and Pontius Pilate.

Some obscurity has arisen in the interpretation of Scriptures in which the word kingdom occurs, from supposing that it always refers to the territory or subjects that are under the government of a king. *King-dom* is king dominion, king jurisdiction. The primary idea is kingly authority. In this primary sense it is used in Luke xix. 12: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom." See also Rev. xvii. 12. This radical idea the word retains everywhere; but it becomes so modified by the connection in which it is used, as to refer to the time, place, or circumstances in which kingly authority is exercised; to the persons over whom it is exercised; and, sometimes, to the benefits resulting from its exercise. An example of this last use is found in Rom. xiv. 17: "The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The phrases, "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of God," "kingdom of Christ," "kingdom of God's dear Son," are used with reference to the reign of the Messiah. They denote *God's exercise of kingly authority in the person of the Messiah;* and this radical idea, as before stated, becomes modified by the connection in which the phrases are used. When parables are introduced with the words "The kingdom of God is like," we are to understand that some fact or truth connected with the reign of the Messiah is illustrated by the parable. It will be impossible to make sense of many passages, if the term be understood always to signify the *subjects* over whom Christ reigns. How, in this signification of the term, can the kingdom be like a merchantman,[1] a net,[2] a treasure?[3] "The kingdom of heaven is like to a man which sowed good seed in his field."[4] Here, no comparison can be intended between the *subjects* of Christ's reign and the man that sowed the seed. But the parable illustrates important

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[1] Matt. xiii. 45.
[2] Matt. xiii. 47.
[3] Matt. xiii. 44.
[4] Matt. xiii. 45

truth connected with the reign of the Messiah. It teaches that the world, represented by the field, is under his dominion; that, for a time, the good and bad are permitted to remain together; but that a separation will finally be made, and the blessings of his reign will be enjoyed by those only who are "the good seed," sown by himself, and who only are "the children of the kingdom."

The mediatorial reign of Christ will include the judgment of the great day. It is said, "We must all stand at the judgment seat of Christ;" and also, in describing the sentences pronounced, "Then shall the king say," &c. Then they who condemned and crucified Christ the king, and all who would not have him to reign over them, shall stand at his tribunal. The decisions of that day will be made according to the relation which each individual has borne to Christ. What men have done to the least of his disciples, he will regard as done to him; and, according to the dispositions so evinced, will be every man's final doom.

Will the mediatorial reign of Christ continue after the transactions of the great day? An important change will doubtless then take place in the manner of his reign. All his enemies will have been subdued, all his ransomed people brought home, and his last act of pardoning mercy performed. Yet, we are informed that the glory of God and the Lamb will be the light of the New Jerusalem;[1] that the Lamb will be in the midst of the throne; and that he will feed the redeemed, and lead them to the fountains of living water.[2] From these representations, we appear authorized to conclude that Christ will remain the medium of communication through which the saints will for ever approach God, and receive glory and bliss from him. The language of Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 25, is not inconsistent with this opinion: "He must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet." When it is said, "Until the law, sin was in the world,[3] we are not to conclude that sin was not in the world afterwards: so, when it is said, "He must reign until," &c., we must not infer that he will not reign after this time. It will not accord with his own representation of the subject, if, when those who would not have him to reign over them, shall have been slain before his face,[4] he himself shall cease to reign. When it is

[1] Rev. xxi. 23
[2] Rev. vii. 17.
[3] Rom. v. 13.
[4] Luke xix. 27.

said, "then shall the Son be subject to the Father,[1] we are not to understand that this subjection excludes the idea of reigning; otherwise it would be implied that his previous reign had not been in subjection to the Father. Christ now reigns in subjection to the Father; but the harmony of his administration with the will and perfections of God, cannot fully appear while rebels go at large under his government; but when all enemies have been subdued, the harmony of his administration with the government of God, absolutely considered, will be made apparent. The coincidence of the two modes of government will be fully manifested. This will be the time of the restitution of all things.[2] He must reign until his enemies are subdued; and the heavens must receive him until the time of the restitution of all things; but he will not, then, either forsake heaven or cease to reign.

CONCLUSION.

"WHAT think ye of Christ?" We may now, with great propriety, consider this question solemnly addressed to us. We have contemplated the person, states, and offices of Christ. What impression does the contemplation leave in our minds? What emotions has it produced? Have the words of the prophet been fulfilled in our case: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him"? Or, can we say, "He is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely"? According as Christ appears in our view, the evidence of our spiritual state is favorable or unfavorable; and by this test, we may try our hope of acceptance through him, and of reigning with him for ever.

In the ordinary experience of mankind, the affections are attracted most strongly by objects near at hand. To the imagination, distance may lend enchantment; but the affections of the heart play around the fireside, and fix their firmest hold on those with whom we converse most familiarly. In accordance with this

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 28. [2] Acts iii. 21.

tendency of our nature, the Son of God attracted the hearts of men, by dwelling among them, and exhibiting himself in familiar intercourse with them, and in the endearing relations well known in human society. We see him, as the affectionate brother and friend, weeping in the sorrows of others, and alleviating their sufferings by words and acts of kindness. The tenderness with which, when hanging on the cross, he committed his mother to the care of his beloved disciple, is an example of filial love, which cannot be contemplated with an unmoved heart. In the simple narratives of his life, which have been given for our instruction, we trace his course in his daily walk as a man among men, going about doing good, and the traits of character exhibited in this familiar intercourse, call forth our love. The heavens have now received him out of our sight, but we know that, in fulfilment of his promise, he is always with us; and we are taught to regard him, not only as near at hand, but also as sympathizing with our infirmities, having been tempted in all points as we are. In the humanity of Jesus, we see the loveliness of the divine perfections familiarly and intelligibly exhibited.

It sometimes happens, in the experience of mankind, that persons of extraordinary merit remain for a time in obscurity, and that those who have been most intimate with them have been taken by surprise, when the unsuspected greatness of their character has been disclosed. Writers of fiction know how to interest the feelings, by presenting great personages under disguise, and unveiling them at a fit moment, to produce impression. But incidents, infinitely transcending all fiction, are found in the true history of Jesus Christ, in which the concealed majesty of his divinity broke forth, and caused surpassing astonishment. The humble sleeper in the boat on the Lake of Tiberias, comes forth from his slumbers, and stills the raging water; and the beholders of the miracle exclaim: "What manner of man is this?" The weary traveller arrives at Bethany, and claims to be the resurrection and the life, and demonstrates the truth of his claim, by calling the dead Lazarus from the tomb. As a condemned malefactor, he hangs on the cross, and expires with such exhibitions of divinity, that the astonished Roman centurion cried: "Truly this man was the Son of God." We have contemplated the divinity of Jesus Christ, not merely in these transient outbursts which occurred while he was on earth,

but in the full demonstration which has been given since he ascended to heaven, and the impression on our hearts ought to be strong and abiding. The disciples who attended on his personal ministry loved and honored him; but when they saw him ascend to heaven, being more deeply impressed with his divinity, they worshipped him. Let us devoutly join in rendering him divine honor.

We read with interest the history of men who have passed through great changes in their condition, and who, in every condition, have displayed great and noble qualities. But no changes of condition possible to men, can equal those which the Son of God has undergone. Once rich in his original glory, he became so poor that he had not where to lay his head: and from this depth of poverty, he has been exalted to supreme dominion, and made proprietor and ruler of all worlds. Through these changes he has ever exhibited such moral perfections as have been most pleasing to God. In whatever condition we view him, let us delight in him, as did his Father.

The offices which Christ sustains toward us, are such as have been in highest repute among men. Prophets, priests, and kings have always been accounted worthy of honor. We should give the highest honor to Christ, who, as a prophet, is superior to Moses; as a priest, superior to Aaron; and as a king, the Lord of David. These offices, as exercised by Christ, deserve our honor, not only because of their excellence, but also because of their adaptedness to us. We are, by nature, ignorant, guilty, and depraved. As ignorant, we need Christ, the prophet, to teach us; as guilty, we need Christ, the priest, to make atonement for us; and as depraved, we need Christ, the king, to rule over us, and bring all our rebellious passions into subjection. These offices of Christ are also adapted to the graces which distinguish and adorn the Christian character. The chief of these, as enumerated by Paul, are faith, hope, and love; in the exercise of *faith*, we receive the truth, revealed by Christ, the prophet; in the exercise of *hope*, we follow Christ, the priest, who has entered into the holiest of all, to appear before God for us; and we submit to Christ, the king, in the exercise of *love*, which is the fulfilling of the law, the principle and sum of all holy obedience.

In the theology of the ancient Christians, Christ held a central and vital place. If we take away from the epistles of Paul all that

is said about Christ, what mutilation shall we make? If, when we have opened anywhere to read, as at 1 Cor. ch. i., we expunge Christ, what have we left? Paul, while in ignorance and unbelief, thought that he did God service, by persecuting Jesus of Nazareth. But when his eyes were opened, to see that the despised Nazarene, whom his nation had crucified, was the Lord of Glory, when he learned that in him are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, unsearchable riches, and the fulness of grace, the heart of the persecutor was changed, and he became devoted to the service of him whom he had sought to destroy. Henceforth, he counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Has our knowledge of Christ produced a like effect on us? If our hearts are in unison with that of the great Apostle, we are prepared to say, from the inmost soul, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel," a gospel of which Christ is not the centre and the sum, "let him be accursed."[1] "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be be anathema maranatha."[2]

In our investigation of religious truth, we have found four sources of knowledge: our own moral feelings, the moral feelings and judgments of others, the course of nature, and the book of divine revelation. The first three of these can give us no knowledge of Jesus Christ and his great salvation. For this knowledge we are wholly indebted to the Bible. Yet, when we have learned our lost and helpless state by nature, the scheme of salvation which the Bible reveals is so perfectly adapted to our condition, that it brings with it its own evidence of having originated in the wisdom of God.

When Paul preached the gospel of salvation, he knew nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. He gloried in nothing, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have tarried long in our meditations on the doctrine concerning Jesus Christ; and, before we dismiss the subject, it may be profitable to linger yet a little time at the cross, that we may again survey its glory, and feel its soul-subduing power.

In the cross of Christ, all the divine perfections are gloriously and harmoniously displayed. Infinite love, inviolable truth, and inflexible justice are all seen, in their brightest and most beautifully

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[1] Gal. i. 8.

[2] 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

mingled colors. The heavens declare the glory of God; but the glory of the cross outshines the wonders of the skies. God's moral perfections are here displayed, which are the highest glory of his character.

The cross of Christ is our only hope of life everlasting. On him who hangs there, our iniquities were laid, and from his wounds flows the blood that cleanses from all sin. Our faith views the bleeding victim, and peacefully relies on the great atoning sacrifice. It views mercy streaming from the cross; and to the cross it comes to obtain every needed blessing.

In the cross, the believer finds the strongest motive to holiness. As we stand before it, and view the exhibition of the Saviour's love, we resolve to live to him who died for us. The world ceases to charm. We become crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us. Sin appears infinitely hateful. We regard it as the accursed thing which caused the death of our beloved Lord; and we grow strong in the purpose to wage against it an exterminating war. By all the Saviour's agonies, we vow to have no peace with it for ever. The cross is the place for penitential tears. We look on him whom we have pierced, and mourn. Our hearts bleed at the sight of the bleeding sufferer, murdered by our sins; and we resolve that the murderers shall die. The cross is a holy place, where we learn to be like Christ, to hate sin as he hated it, and to delight in the law of God which was in his heart. In the presence of the cross, we feel that omnipotent grace has hold of our heart; and we surrender to dying love.

The wisdom of man did not devise the wonderful plan of salvation. As well might we suppose that it directed the great Creator, when he spread abroad the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. But as in the heavens and earth, human reason may see the power and wisdom of God, so, to the Christian heart, Christ crucified is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. The doctrine of the cross needs no other demonstration of its divine origin, than its power to sanctify the heart, and bring it into willing and joyful subjection to Christ.

BOOK SIXTH.

DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

INTRODUCTION.

DUTY OF LIVING AND WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.[1]

We live, move, and have our being in God. His presence is ever with us; and by his power, we are, at every moment, upheld in being, and the faculties and powers, from which all movements, corporeal or mental, proceed, are preserved in existence and action. Such is our constant and immediate dependence on God. We are, in like manner and degree, dependent on the Holy Spirit, for the existence of spiritual life, and for the faculties and powers necessary to all spiritual action. Our dependence on the Holy Spirit extends still further. The very disposition to holy action, proceeds from the Spirit; and the production of this disposition, is his peculiar work in sanctification. In our natural actions, we live and move in God; in our spiritual actions, we live and walk in the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture representations of our dependence on the Holy Spirit, are full and strong. Our spiritual life comes from him, for it is the Spirit that quickeneth;[2] and he is called the Spirit of Life.[3] When the prophet saw the dead bones in the valley, he prayed: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live;"[4] and the spirit of life entered into them.

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[1] Gal. v. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
[2] John vi. 63. [3] Rom. viii. 2. [4] Ez. xxxvii. 9.

So souls, dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened by the Holy Spirit. And we live in the Holy Spirit as dependent on him for spiritual life, as the body is dependent for animal life on the atmosphere which we breathe. Hence proceed the earnest prayers, that the Holy Spirit may be granted, and may not be taken away.[1] And hence the bestowment of the Holy Spirit is regarded as the giving of all good.[2] The importance of the Holy Spirit's influence in the exercises of the spiritual life, may be inferred from such passages as the following: "Led by the Spirit;"[3] "Mind the things of the Spirit;"[4] "Filled with the Spirit;"[5] "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh;"[6] "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;"[7] "The Spirit helpeth our infirmity;"[8] "Changed into the same image by the Spirit;"[9] "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits."[10]

No believer, who has any just sense of his dependence on the Holy Spirit, for the divine life which he enjoys, and all its included blessings, can be indifferent towards the Agent by whom all this good is bestowed. He cannot willingly "grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom he is sealed to the day of redemption." He will seek to know, in all things, what is the mind of the Spirit; and, to him, the communion of the Holy Spirit will be the sweetest foretaste of heaven, that can be enjoyed on earth. And to him, therefore, the study of the Holy Spirit's character and office, will be a source of delight.

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[1] Ps. li. 11, 12.
[2] Compare Matt. vii. 11 with Luke xi. 13
[3] Gal. v. 18.
[4] Rom. viii. 5.
[5] Eph. v. 18.
[6] Gal. v. 17.
[7] Rom. viii. 13.
[8] Rom. viii. 26.
[9] 2 Cor. iii. 18.
[10] Rom. viii. 16.

CHAPTER I.

PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON, DISTINCT FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON.[1]

The Holy Spirit is a person, and not a mere influence or operation. This may be proved by the following arguments:

1. When Christ promised his coming as another Comforter, the language clearly refers to him as a person: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you."[2] "The Comforter whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you."[3]

2. Things are, in the Holy Scriptures, attributed to the Holy Spirit, which can be true only of a person: "He divideth to every man severally as he will;"[4] "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them;"[5] "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost;"[6] "Grieve not the Holy Spirit."[7]

3. The commission given to the apostles required them to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.[8] A mere influence or virtue, could not thus be associated with the Father and the Son; nor would it accord with the language of Scripture, to speak of the *name* of an influence; or with the analogy of faith, to administer baptism in the name of an influence. In the apostolical benediction, the Holy Spirit is connected, in a similar manner, with the Father and the Son: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."[9] In 1 Cor. xii. 4–6, the Holy Spirit is introduced, together with God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, as *a personal* agent equally with them.

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[1] Isaiah xlviii. 16; Matt. iii. 16; John xiv. 16, 26; xvi. 7; Acts x. 19, 20; xiii. 2; xv. 28; xx. 28; Eph. iv. 30; Matt. xxviii. 19.

[2] John xiv. 16. [3] John xiv. 26. [4] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

[5] Acts xiii. 2. [6] Acts v. 3. [7] Eph. iv. 30.

[8] Matt. xxviii. 19. [9] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

To these arguments, it may be opposed, that the Scriptures frequently use the words Spirit, Holy Spirit, to denote divine influence. But it is very common, in language, for an influence to be designated by the name of the source from which it emanates. We say: "This plant thrives in the shade; that, in the sun;" but by the word sun, we mean, not the body of the luminary, but the light and heat emanating from it. So, when it is said: "He will report that God is in you of a truth,"[1] the general omnipresence of God is not meant; for this is equally true of all persons and places. A peculiar presence, implying special divine influence, is intended. It would be improper to argue from this passage, that God is nothing but *an influence;* and it is, in the same manner, improper to argue that the Holy Spirit is not a person, because the name is used in the Scriptures for the influence which he, as a personal agent, exerts.

The frequency with which the name is used to denote the influence exerted, may perhaps be accounted for, from the fact, that the name is given to the agent, because of his influence. It cannot denote anything peculiar in the nature of the agent; for the first and second persons in the Godhead, are, in their nature, spirit, and holy, as truly as the third. The name must, therefore, be regarded as distinguishing him with reference to his operation. He is called holy, because he is the immediate agent in the production of holiness; and he is called the Spirit, the Spirit of God, because he is the immediate agent in exerting the invisible, life-giving, divine influence which proceeds from God.

The Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son. The same passages which prove his personality prove this also. He could not be another Comforter, if he were not distinct from the Son; nor sent by the Father, if he were not distinct from the Father. In the commission to baptise, and in the benediction, his personality is not more manifest than the distinction from the Father and the Son, with whom he is named.

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[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

CHAPTER II.

THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD.[1]

When we have ascertained that there is a person to whom the name Holy Spirit is applied, we can have little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that he is a divine person. The following arguments establish this truth.

1. In the commission he is equally included with the Father and the Son, in the name into which we are baptised. If he is not God, when we devote ourselves to him in our baptism, we are guilty of idolatry. It is no objection to this argument, that Paul says the Israelites were baptised unto Moses.[2] A formal baptism in the name of Moses is neither affirmed nor intended. An analogy is exhibited between the course of a believer who dedicates himself to Christ in baptism, and the course of the Israelites, who gave themselves up to the guidance of Moses, from the Red Sea to the promised land: but an analogy only is all that is intended. The Corinthians were not baptised in the name of Paul;[3] though it was their duty to follow him as he followed Christ: and the Israelites were not baptised in the name of Moses; though they followed him as their leader. The Angel, in whom the name of God was, went before them, in the pillar of cloud and fire; and Moses, equally with all the rest, followed his guidance, and acknowledged his authority.

2. In the benediction, the Spirit is named, equally with the Father and the Son, and regarded as the source of spiritual blessings. The words may be considered a prayer to the Holy Spirit, for the bestowment of these blessings.

3. When the bodies of believers are called the temple of the

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[1] Matt. xxviii. 19; Heb. ix. 14; Ps. cxxxix. 7; 1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Acts v. 3, 4.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 2.

[3] 1 Cor. i. 13.

Holy Ghost,[1] the deity of the Holy Ghost is recognised. They to whom temples of wood or stone were erected, were regarded as deities: and he to whom the bodies of the saints are temples, must be God. But we are not left to our own inference on this subject. Paul has drawn the conclusion for us: for after having stated that the bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, he speaks of them as belonging to God;[2] and in another place, when speaking of the saints as a temple, he calls the building a "habitation of God through the Spirit."[3] The same view is presented in 1 Cor. iii. 16: "Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." So the heathen deities were imagined to dwell in the temples dedicated to them; and so God was in his holy temple at Jerusalem.

4. The heinousness of the sin against the Holy Ghost, is proof of his divinity. When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost, Peter explained the enormity of their sin in these words: "Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.[4] To sin against the Holy Ghost, is to sin, not against a creature, but against God. This argument acquires greatly increased force, when we consider the words of Christ: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.[5] Whatever be the reason that renders blasphemy against the Holy Ghost unpardonable, it must include in it that he is God. If he is not God, sin committed against him would be less heinous than that committed against the Father and the Son.

5. Passages of the Old Testament which speak of Jehovah, the Supreme God, are, in the New Testament, applied to the Holy Ghost.[6]

6. The attributes of God are applied, in Scripture, to the Holy Spirit.

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[1] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 20. [3] Eph. ii. 22.
[4] Acts v. 3, 4. [5] Matt. xii. 31.
[6] Ex. xvii. 7 compared with Heb. iii. 9; Isaiah vi. 8, with Acts xxviii. 25; Jer. xxxi. 31–34, with Heb. x. 15–17.

Eternity. "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God."[1]

Omnipresence. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy presence?"[2]

Omniscience. "The Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God."[3]

7. Divine works are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

Creation. The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters."[4] "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens.[5]

Providence. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth."[6]

Miracles. "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."[7] "To another is given the working of miracles by the same Spirit."[8]

Resurrection of Christ. "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."[9] Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."[10]

Resurrection of believers. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."[11]

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[1] Heb. ix. 14. [2] Ps. cxxxix. 7. [3] 1 Cor. ii. 10.
[4] Gen. i. 2. [5] Job xxvi. 13. [6] Ps. civ. 30.
[7] Matt. xii. 28. [8] 1 Cor. xii. 10. [9] Rom. i. 4.
[10] 1 Pet. iii. 18. [11] Rom. viii. 11.

CHAPTER III.

OFFICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SANCTIFIER AND COMFORTER OF GOD'S PEOPLE.[1]

The Holy Spirit is the author of holiness in all those who are saved: "Through sanctification of the Spirit."[2] "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified by the Spirit of our God."[3] He is the author of the new or spiritual life which is produced in regeneration.[4] Not only the beginning of the new life, but its whole progress, is dependent on the Spirit: wherefore, believers are said to live in the Spirit,[5] to walk in the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit,[6] and to be filled with the Spirit;[7] and, for this reason David prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me."[8] As it is his office to change the soul, and from a state of death in trespasses and sins, bring it into a new life, so it is his office to change our vile body, and fashion it like the glorious body of Christ: "He that raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.[9] As both body and spirit are redeemed by Christ, so both body and spirit are changed by the Holy Spirit, and fitted for the presence and enjoyment of God.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter of God's people. By his teaching, the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins is obtained. The Saviour promised: "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."[10] In fulfilment of this promise, the Spirit makes known the sufficiency and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, and the efficacy of his blood to cleanse from sin. By the Holy Spirit the promises of the divine word are applied to the heart. Hence, peace and joy are called the fruit of the Spirit.[11] These spiritual enjoyments, which are a foretaste of heaven, are called

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[1] Ps. li. 10–12; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; John xiv. 26; Acts ix. 31; Rom. v. 5; viii. 13, 16, 26; 1 Cor. vi. 11; 2 Cor. i. 22; iii. 18; Gal. v. 22; 2 Thes. ii. 13.

[2] 1 Pet. i. 2. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 11. [4] John iii. 6.

[5] Gal. v. 25. [6] Gal. v. 18. [7] Eph. v. 18.

[8] Ps. li. 11. [9] Rom. viii. 11. [10] John xvi. 15.

[11] Gal. v. 22.

"the earnest of the Spirit."[1] And, as the earnest is given by him, we have reason to conclude that the full possession will be given by him. As Christ will be the medium through which the felicity of the future world will be bestowed; so, the Holy Spirit will be the immediate agent in bestowing it. The first comfort here below, and the full bliss and glory of heaven, are alike his work.

CONCLUSION.

ADAM became a living soul when God breathed into him the breath of life:[2] and from that time, the process of breathing is evidence that life exists. Prayer may be regarded as the breathing of the spiritual man. Sufficient proof was given that Saul of Tarsus had been converted, when the Lord said, "Behold, he prayeth."[3] True prayer proceeds from the Holy Spirit, imparting spiritual life, and enkindling those spiritual desires which find their vent in prayer. These desires are breathed into the bosom of God, in the exercise of filial confidence in him; and, being in accordance with the will of God,[4] they are regarded by him with favor, and obtain answers of grace and peace.

From this view of prayer, we may see the propriety of the Apostle's injunction: "Pray without ceasing."[5] The cessation of prayer would be the cessation of spiritual life. A form of words may not be incessantly used; but spiritual desires must ever have place in the heart; and the habit must ever exist, of looking to God for the fulfilment of these desires. This constant intercourse with God is the life of faith. We live with him, converse with him, and enjoy communion with him, through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.

We often complain that our prayers are not answered; but it would be profitable to inquire, what those unanswered petitions were. Did we ask for wealth, power, and long life? If so, our desires were carnal, and did not proceed from the Spirit of God.

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[1] Eph. i. 13, 14; 2 Cor. i. 22. [2] Gen. ii. 7. [3] Acts ix. 11.
[4] Rom. viii. 27. [5] 1 Thess. v. 17.

We must learn to regulate our desires by the will of God, and our prayers will be sure to obtain a gracious hearing.

Sincere prayer begins with the very commencement of spiritual life. An infant's cries express its wants, before it knows how to express them in words; and the tender mother will understand this inarticulate language. So the desires of the spiritual infant may be signified by groanings which cannot be uttered:"[1] but the Lord understands these groans, and knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, who maketh intercession for them. As the lamb in the bosom of the kind shepherd; as the babe on the breast of its tender mother; so the spiritual babe reposes on the bosom of eternal love; and in that bosom breathes all its desires.

Spiritual life, evidenced at first by the breathing of prayer, is afterwards indicated by spiritual growth. To be spiritual, we must not ever remain babes in religion. Paul said to the Corinthians, "I could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."[2] Spiritual life is progressive, and tends to make us men, strong men in Christ Jesus. The truth of God supplies the milk for babes, and the strong meat for those who have attained to greater age.[3] We have been engaged in the study of this truth; and it will be well for us to inquire whether our spiritual life has been nourished by it, and whether we are growing in faith, and love, and every grace. Unless the truth strengthens the inner man, and gives increased vigor in the Christian life, our study of it has been in vain.

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[1] Rom. viii. 26. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 1. [3] 1 Pet. ii. 2; Heb. v. 12.

BOOK SEVENTH.

DOCTRINE CONCERNING DIVINE GRACE.

INTRODUCTION.

DUTY OF GRATITUDE FOR DIVINE GRACE.[1]

As love is the affection which should arise in our hearts, from a view of God's character, so gratitude is the affection which should be produced, by a view of the benefits that he confers. The stream of his benefits flows incessantly so that our cup is ever full. To receive the benefits thoughtlessly, like the brutes that perish, and to enjoy them without thanksgiving to him from whom they come, is demonstration complete of human depravity. Such demonstration is given daily and hourly in the conduct of mankind, and by it God is offended and his wrath provoked. The unthankful man is the evil man,[2] and the enemy of God. Hence, when we are called on to love our enemies, the example proposed for our imitation is the bestowment of God's providential blessing on the unthankful.

Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

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[1] 2 Thess. ii. 13. We are bound to thank God alway for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to sal vation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

1 Cor. xv. 10. By the grace of God, I am what I am.

2 Cor. ix. 15. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

[2] Luke vi. 35.

We are bound to thank God for the blessings of providence so incessantly and so richly bestowed; but far higher obligations to gratitude, arise from the grace that bringeth salvation.[1] This grace includes God's gift of his Son, a gift so great that no name for it can be found. "God *so* loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[2] The love of the Son, which demands our gratitude, is not less unmeasured, than the love of the Father: whence Paul labored to explore "the height, the length, the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."[3] And our gratitude is not complete till we acknowledge and celebrate also, the love of the Spirit,[4] by whom believers are fitted for the enjoyment of God, and brought into fellowship with him.

In exercising and cultivating our gratitude for the blessings of salvation, we must distinctly recognise that they come from God, and that they are intentionally bestowed. When we trace them to their source, the infinite love of the triune God; and when we receive them, as conferred according to his eternal counsel, we are prepared while we enjoy the benefit, to return thanks to its Author, and to exclaim with liveliest emotion, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."[5]

That our gratitude to God may be proportional to the blessing received, we should count his mercies over, and survey their magnitude. Unmeasurable! unspeakable! passing knowledge!—yet we should labor to know them; and as we make progress in this spiritual knowledge, our gratitude should swell and fill the enlarged capacity of the mind.

In order to the full exercise of gratitude to God it is necessary to be thoroughly impressed with the conviction that the blessings received are wholly undeserved, and proceed entirely from the mere mercy and grace of God. When we feel that we are less than the least of all God's mercies, that our only desert is hell, and that if salvation is bestowed on us, it will be of his own good pleasure; we are prepared to give thanks for the unspeakable gift, and to say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."[6]

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[1] Tit. ii. 11. [2] John iii. 16. [3] Eph. iii. 18, 19.
[4] Rom. xv. 30. [5] Ps. ciii. 2. [6] Ps. cxv.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRINITY.

THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, ARE THREE PERSONS IN ONE DIVINE ESSENCE.[1]

The unity of God is a fundamental doctrine of religion; and no doctrine can be true which is inconsistent with it. All admit that the Father is God; and we have seen that the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, according to the teachings of the sacred Scriptures. To reconcile the proper deity of these three, with the strict unity of God, is a matter of great difficulty. All admit that they cannot be three and one in the same respect; and divines have usually held that they are three in person, and one in essence.

The doctrine of a three-fold distinction in the Godhead, belongs especially to the economy of grace, and is therefore more clearly revealed in the New Testament than in the Old. Some intimations of it, however, may be found in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the very first verse of the Bible, the name of God is plural, and the verb "created," with which it is construed, is singular. This countenances the opinion, that there is plurality as well as unity in the Godhead. But since words which are plural in form, are sometimes used to denote objects which are singular, this argument for a plurality in the Godhead cannot be regarded as in itself conclusive. It derives strength, however, from two considerations: 1. The Hebrew scriptures guard the doctrine of God's unity with great care; and if all plurality were inconsistent with it, this important purpose of the revelation made to the Hebrews, would have been better subserved if none but singular names for the deity had been admitted, yet plural names are very commonly employed. And in one remarkable case, the Hebrew name *Elohim*, is used in an express declaration of the divine unity. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our Elohim, is one Jehovah."[2] Why was the

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[1] Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Rev. i. 4; Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7; Isaiah xlviii. 16; John xiv. 16; Matt. iii. 16, 17.

[2] Deut. vi. 4.

plural name here introduced? The declaration of the divine unity would have been complete without it. If it was introduced to guard against an improper inference from the use of plural names, it shows the use of such names to have been dangerous, and therefore difficult to reconcile with the wisdom of revelation. If the name Jehovah be understood to refer to the divine essence; and the name Elohim, to the three divine persons; the passage may be interpreted consistently and beautifully, and it becomes an explicit declaration of the New Testament doctrine. 2. The Hebrew scriptures contain other intimations of a plurality in the Godhead. Plural pronouns are applied to God, and consultation is attributed to him. "Let us make man."[1] "Let us go down and confound their language."[2] A consultation with created beings cannot here be supposed. The opinion that God spoke in these cases, after the pompous manner of eastern monarchs, besides being, on other accounts, wholly improbable, is completely set aside, by the passage, "Behold, the man is become as one of us."[3] No eastern monarch ever spoke of his individual unity, in this style. No consistent interpretation of this language can be given, without admitting a plurality in the Godhead; and this admission explains the use of plural names for God.

That the plurality in the Godhead is three-fold, has been inferred from the three-fold ascription of holiness[4] to God, and the three-fold benediction of the High Priest.[5] A more satisfactory argument is derived from passages in which the three divine persons are distinctly brought to view.[6]

This doctrine is more clearly revealed in the New Testament. In the formula of Christian baptism it is clearly exhibited.[7] We are baptised into one name, because God is one; but that is the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, because it belongs alike to each of these divine persons. Here, this doctrine meets us, at our very entrance on the profession of the Christian religion. If Christ was not God, he was justly condemned to death, and his religion is false; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter whom he promised, is as little entitled to regard as

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[1] Gen. i. 26. [2] Gen. xi. 7. [3] Gen. iii. 22.
[4] Isaiah vi. 3. [5] Num. vi. 24–26.
[6] Isaiah xlviii. 16; lxi. 1; lxiii. 7–10. [7] Matt. xxviii. 19.

he was. If Christ and the Holy Spirit are not God, the form of baptism should be rejected, as of a piece with the false religion into which it introduces us. No man can consistently receive Christian baptism, without believing the doctrine of the Trinity.

We have spoken of this doctrine as belonging especially to the economy of grace. It is here that it is most clearly unfolded to our view, and without this doctrine, the covenant of grace, and its developments in the great work of salvation, cannot be understood. Yet there are fainter exhibitions of the doctrine in other works of God. This is true of creation. The consultation at the creation of man has already been noticed, as a proof of plurality in the Godhead. Moses says, "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters." Job says, "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens. John says, "By him (the Word) all things were made."[1] All the divine persons, therefore, were concerned in creation: and other passages teach that they are also concerned in providence.[2]

The most sober-minded divines admit that there is incomprehensible mystery in the doctrine of the Trinity. All attempts to explain it have failed. Two methods which have been proposed to bring it within our comprehension, deserve special notice.

Some who are called Sabellians, maintain, that the distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is official and not personal. They hold that God is one in person, as well as in essence; but that he manifests himself in three different ways, and that the three different names denote these three modes of manifestation. This simplifies the doctrine; but it does not accord with the Scriptures. According to this view of the doctrine, we might paraphrase the words of Christ, in John, xiv. 16, thus: "I, who am the same person with the Father, will pray the Father, who is no other than myself, in a different office, or mode of manifestation, and he shall give you another comforter, who is not another, but the same person as my Father and myself." We see, from this specimen, that this explanation of the doctrine is at variance with the word of God.

Others admit the distinction of persons in the Godhead, and

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[1] Gen. i. 2; Job xxvi. 13; John i. 3. [2] Heb. i. 3; Isaiah xxxiv. 15, 16.

explain that the three possess one essence, just as three men, Peter, James, and John, possess one nature. This is Tritheism. It makes the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Gods, just as Peter, James, and John, are three men. If we may call the three persons one God, merely because they are alike in their nature; we may, with equal reason, call all mankind one man; and we may maintain that Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto, and all the heathen deities were one God. Paul's distinction, "There are gods many; but to us there is but one God,"[1] is a distinction without a difference; for the many gods are one, in the same sense in which the three divine persons are supposed to be one. This explanation must, therefore, be rejected, as inconsistent with the proper unity of God.

Attempts have frequently been made, to illustrate the mystery of the Trinity, by means of material objects. One of these may be cited as a specimen of the rest. Water, ice, and snow, it is said, are different things, and yet they are but one. For aught that appears, it would have served quite as well, to illustrate the mystery, by three separate glasses of water, all in the liquid form. The distinction between them would have been as perfect; and the identity of nature would have been as real, and more apparent. All such illustrations darken counsel with words without knowledge. What shall we liken unto the Lord?

These efforts to explain the doctrine, are not simply fruitless, but they lead to error. If the mind receives satisfaction from them, it is by a false view of God's mode of existence, and thinking him such an one as ourselves. It is far wiser to admit, that none by searching can find out God; and to abstain from unavailing efforts to comprehend what is incomprehensible to our finite minds. What God tells us on the subject, we ought to believe; and with this measure of knowledge, we ought to be satisfied; and all beyond this is human speculation, of which it is our duty and interest to beware. Nor are we justly liable to the reproach of believing what we do not understand. The teaching of divine revelation, we may understand, and we should labor to understand; and the mystery which remains unrevealed to our understanding, is not an object of our faith. The proposition, *God is incomprehensible*, is

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

simple and intelligible, and our faith embraces it. God is the subject of this proposition; and, if a full understanding of the subject were necessary to faith, a belief of this proposition would be impossible. Though we do not comprehend God, we comprehend the meaning of the proposition; and this is what we believe. So the doctrine of the Trinity, as an object of our faith, may be expressed in propositions, each one of which is intelligible, notwithstanding the incomprehensibility of the subject.

The view which has been presented, is important, to strengthen our faith in the doctrine of the Trinity. So long as we imagine that a full comprehension of the subject is necessary to the exercise of faith, we must embrace the truth feebly. But let us examine the propositions, in which the doctrine may be expressed, and we shall find each one of them perfectly intelligible. The Father is God;—the Son is God;—the Holy Ghost is God;—there is but one God. All these propositions, we may understand, and receive with unwavering faith; while we are well assured that our understandings fall infinitely short of comprehending the great subject, and that, in harmonizing the last proposition with the preceding three, there is a difficulty which finite intelligence cannot explain.

In receiving a truth which is attended with difficulty, our faith may be assisted, by noticing that other truths, which we are compelled to admit, are attended with equal difficulty. The Omnipresence of God, may be shown to be as incomprehensible as the Trinity. If, at the same moment, a ball of matter is here, a ball there, and a ball yonder, we know that there are three balls. If, in the illustration, we substitute an angel for the ball, we know that there are three angels in the three places, and not one and the same angel. Yet the doctrine of God's omnipresence teaches, that a whole deity is here, a whole deity there, and a whole deity yonder; and yet it is one and the same deity which is present at each place. If an entire deity may dwell, at the same time, in three separate places, and yet be but one, why may not an entire deity dwell in the three separate persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and yet be but one God? There is, perhaps, no analogy between the two cases, except in this, that they alike confound our arithmetic; but this analogy is sufficient for our present purpose. Were God's mode of existence like that of

created things, either material or spiritual, he could not be in several places at the same time, or in three distinct persons; and yet be an undivided unit. We are compelled to admit the omnipresence of God, and we should admit, with equal faith, on the authority of God's word, the doctrine of the Trinity, ascribing the difficulty of the subject to the incomprehensibility of the divine nature.

The doctrine of God's omnipresence has, in one particular, greater difficulty, than that of the Trinity. The latter has a relief not discoverable in the other, arising from the consideration, that God is not three and one in the same respect. God is three in person, one in essence; and, although we may be unable to explain the precise difference between person and essence, the fact that there is a difference, relieves the doctrine from the charge of inconsistency.

We study the human mind in the phenomena which it exhibits. The operations of memory, imagination, reasoning, &c., differ widely from each other; but we refer them all to the one indivisible substance, called mind, of which we have no knowledge, except what we acquire from the phenomena. What we know of God, we learn from the manifestations which he has made of himself, in his works and word. In these manifestations, we discover the personal distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet, as taught by the divine word, we refer all the manifestations to the one indivisible essence, in which the unity of God consists. It is not a threefold manifestation of the same person, as the Sabellians hold; but a manifestation of three distinct persons, counselling and covenanting with each other, one sending another, one speaking to another, and of the third, &c. Nothing like this appears in the phenomena of one human mind: but we cannot thence infer, that it cannot be in the manifestations of one divine mind.

The word Trinity is not in the Bible, and objection has therefore been made to its use. As signifying tri-unity, three in one, it is an expressive name for the doctrine. As a convenient word, we are at liberty to use it, as we do many other words not found in the Bible; and the propriety of using it is the greater, because there is no single word in the Bible, which can be substituted for it. But we are under no obligation to contend for the name, which is human, provided we firmly maintain the doctrine, which is divine.

The word *person*, also, which is used in stating this doctrine, is without Scripture precedent. Some have cited, as authority for its use, the passage in Heb. i. 3: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Here, it is alleged, the person of the Father is mentioned; and, as the Son is his express image, we must conclude that he, also, is a person; and, having established the personal distinction between the Father and the Son, no doubt can remain, that the Holy Spirit is a third person. To all this, it may be answered, that the word *person* is not a good rendering of the Greek word here used, the sense of which would be better expressed by the word *substance*. The passage properly interpreted, refers to the full display of the Godhead, made through Jesus Christ as mediator, and not to the relation subsisting among the divine persons. But though there is no Scripture precedent for the use of the word, must it therefore be abandoned? A scrupulosity, which should refuse to use any word not found in the Bible, would be unwise, and lead to no good result. No one would refuse to apply the word *person* to Jesus Christ, and speak of him as a holy and just person, an extraordinary or wonderful person; or to say that his divine and human natures are united in one person: yet it would be difficult to produce Scripture precedent for this application of the term. Paul does speak, in 2 Cor. ii. 10, of "the person of Christ;" but a better rendering of this passage would be, "in the presence of Christ;" and Pilate's wife said, Mat. xxvii.: "Have thou nothing to do with this just person;" but the word *person* is here supplied by our translators, and has no word corresponding to it in the original text. Yet our translators, in applying this word to Christ, have conformed to the common usage of the word, adopted and sustained by the common sense of mankind. Now, if Jesus Christ was a person, in the common acceptation of the term; and if he addressed his Father, and spoke of the Holy Spirit, as one human person would address another, and speak of a third, it must be an excessive scrupulosity, which refuses to apply the term to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Son. Some have preferred to substitute the word *manifestation;* but this is equally without Scripture precedent; and to say, that one manifestation speaks to another, and of a third: would be unintelligible. We may, therefore, defend the use of the term person, provided we remember that it

is a human expedient to avoid circumlocution. But if any one proceed to draw from the term, an inference which will affect the doctrine, he must be reminded that the word is human. If any one should infer, when we speak of the three divine persons, that they are as distinct from each other, in every respect, as the three human persons, Peter, James, and John, he is building an inference, on a foundation not authorized by the word of God.

CHAPTER II.

COVENANT OF GRACE.

THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS CO-OPERATE IN MAN'S SALVATION ACCORDING TO AN ETERNAL COVENANT.[1]

On a former occasion, it was shown that the Scriptures use the term covenant with great latitude of meaning. The propriety of its use in the present case, cannot well be questioned. We have three divine persons, who are parties in this covenant; and the doctrine of God's unity cannot exclude the notion of a covenant, without, at the same time, excluding the distinction of persons in the Godhead. We are not to imagine, as included in this covenant transaction, a proposal of terms by one party, and a deliberation, followed with an acceptance or rejection of them, by the other parties. These things occur, in the making of human covenants, because of the imperfection of the parties. In condescension to our weakness, the Scriptures use language taken from the affairs of men. They speak as if a formal proposal had been made, at the creation of man, addressed by one of the parties to the others: "Let us make man;" but this is in accommodation to our modes of conception. An agreement and co-operation of the divine persons, in the creation of man, is what is taught in this passage. This agreement and co-operation extend to all the works of God: "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will."[2] The idea

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[1] Ps. ii. 8; xl. 6–8; lxxxix. 3; Isaiah xlix. 3–12; John xvii. 6; Heb. xiii. 20; Titus i. 2.

[2] Eph. i. 11.

of *counsel* in all these works, accords with that of consultation which is presented in the account of man's creation. In every work of God, the divine persons must either agree or disagree. As they alike possess infinite wisdom, disagreement among them is impossible. The salvation of men is a work of God, in which the divine persons concur. It is performed according to an eternal purpose; and in this purpose, as well as in the work, the divine persons concur; and this concurrence is their eternal covenant. The purpose of the one God, is the covenant of the Trinity.

In the work of salvation, the divine persons co-operate in different offices; and these are so clearly revealed, as to render the personal distinction in the Godhead more manifest, than it is in any other of God's works. Beyond doubt, these official relations are severally held, by the perfect agreement of all; and, speaking after the manner of men, the adjustment of these relations, and the assignment of the several parts in the work, are the grand stipulations of the eternal covenant.

That the covenant is eternal, may be argued from the eternity, unchangeableness, and omniscience of the parties, and from the declarations of Scripture which directly or indirectly relate to it: "Through the blood of the everlasting covenant."[1] "His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus."[2] "In hope of eternal life promised before the world began."[3] "Grace given in Christ Jesus before the world began."[4]

Although God's purpose is *one*, we are obliged, according to our modes of conception, to view it, and speak of it, as consisting of various parts. So, the eternal covenant is one; but it is revealed to us in a manner adapted to our conceptions and to our spiritual benefit. The work of redemption by Christ is presented in the Gospel as the great object of our faith; and the stipulation for the accomplishment of this work, is the prominent point exhibited in the revelation which is made to us respecting the covenant of grace. The agreement between the Father and the Son is conspicuously brought to view, in various parts of the sacred volume: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me."[5] "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost

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[1] Heb. xiii. 20. [2] Eph. iii. 11. [3] Tit. i. 2
[4] 2 Tim. i. 9. [5] John xvii. 6.

parts of the earth for thy possession."[1] "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God;"[2] and in Isaiah, chapter xlix., the stipulations between the Father and the Son are presented, almost as if they had been copied from an original record of the transaction.

According to the covenant arrangement, the Son appeared in human nature, in the form of a servant; and, after obeying unto death, was exalted by the Father to supreme dominion. The Holy Spirit also is revealed as acting in a subordinate office, being sent by the Father and by the Son. The Father alone is not presented as acting in a subordinate office; but appears as sustaining the full authority of the Godhead, sending the Son, giving him a people to be redeemed, prescribing the terms, accepting the service, rewarding and glorifying the Son, and sending the Holy Spirit. In all this the Father appears as the representative of the Godhead, in its authority and majesty. The Son also sustains a representative character. The promise of eternal life was made, before the world began, to the people of God, in him as their representative. The reconciliation between God and men is provided for by the covenant engagement between the Father and the Son; the Father acting as the representative of the Godhead, and the Son as the representative and surety of his people. The Holy Spirit concurs in this arrangement, and takes his part in the work, in harmony with the other persons of the Godhead. His peculiar office is necessary to complete the plan, and to reward the obedience of the Son by the salvation of his redeemed people. The promises of the Father to the Son include the gift of the Holy Spirit; and, therefore, the sending of the Spirit is attributed to the Son;[3] and sometimes to the Father at the petition of the Son.[4]

In this order of operation, inferiority of nature is not implied, in the subordination of office to which the Son and the Spirit voluntarily consent. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in each of the divine persons, and renders the fulfilment of the covenant infallibly sure, in all its stipulations. The Holy Spirit, in the execution of his office, dwells in believers; but he brings with him

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[1] Ps. ii. 8.
[2] Ps. xl. 6–18.
[3] John xvi. 7.
[4] John xiv. 16.

the fulness of the Godhead, so that God is in them, and they are the temple of God, and filled with the fulness of God. The Son or Word, in the execution of his office, becomes the man Jesus Christ; but the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him; so that, in his deepest humiliation he is God manifest in the flesh, God over all, blessed for ever.

The order of operation in this mysterious and wonderful economy, can be learned from divine revelation only. Here we should study it with simple faith, relying on the testimony of God. In the representation of it here exhibited, we may discover that the blessings of grace, proceeding from God, appear to originate in the Father, "of whom are all things," to be conferred through the Son, "by whom are all things," and by the Spirit, who is the immediate agent in bestowing them, the last in the order of operation. The approach to God, in acts of devotion, is in the reverse order. The Spirit makes intercession *in* the saints, moving them, as a spirit of supplication, and assisting their infirmities, when they know not what to pray for. Their prayers are offered through Christ, as the medium of approach; and the Father, as the highest representative of the Godhead, is the ultimate object of the worship. Through him [Christ] we have access by one Spirit to the Father.[1] The Spirit moves us to honor the Son and the Father: and for this purpose takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, that we may believe in him, and through him approach the Father. In this work he acts for the whole Godhead, and therefore his drawing is ascribed to the Father: "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him."[2] When we come to Jesus Christ, the whole Godhead meets us again in the person of the Mediator: for "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."[3] And when we address the Father, as the ultimate object of our worship, the whole Godhead is there, and receives our adorations. In the covenant of grace, the triune God is so presented to the view of the believer, that he may worship without distraction of thought, with full confidence of acceptance, and with a clear perception that God is to him all and in all. In the retirement of the closet, the devotional man addresses God as present in the secret place, and holds communion with him, as a

[1] Eph. ii. 18. [2] John vi. 44. [3] 2 Cor. v. 19.

friend near at hand. When he comes forth into the busy world, he sees God all around him, in the heavens, and in the earth; and holds converse with him in this different manifestation of himself. When he lifts his thoughts to the high and holy place where God's throne is, and prays, "Our Father which art in heaven," his mind is directed to the highest and most glorious manifestation of the Deity. In all this he suffers no distraction of thought. The same omnipresent One is addressed, whether conceived to be in the closet, or in the world, or in the highest heavens. With equal freedom from distraction we may worship the Infinite One, whether we approach him as the Holy Spirit, operating on the heart; or as the Son, the Mediator between God and men; or as the Father, representing the full authority and majesty of the Godhead. We worship God, and God alone, whether our devotions are directed to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit; for the divine essence, undivided and indivisible, belongs to each of the three persons.

To guard against mistake, it should be observed, that the covenant which we have been considering is not identical with the new covenant of which Paul speaks in the epistle to the Hebrews. The latter is made, according to the prophecy which he quotes, "with the house of Israel and the house of Judah;"[1] whereas the covenant of which we have treated, is not made with man. There is, however, a close connection between them. In the eternal covenant, promises are made to the Son, as the representative of his people: in the new covenant, these promises are made to them personally, and, in part, fulfilled to them. The promises are made to them: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"[2] and they are, in part, fulfilled. "I will put my law in their minds, and write it in their hearts."

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[1] Heb. viii. 8. [2] Heb. viii. 10.

CHAPTER III.

BLESSINGS OF GRACE.

THE SALVATION OF MEN IS ENTIRELY OF DIVINE GRACE.[1]

Grace is unmerited favor. Paul distinguishes, in Rom. iv. 4, between the reward of grace and the reward of debt. When good is conferred because it is due, it is not of grace. Whatever may be claimed on the score of justice, cannot be regarded as unmerited favor. Justice gives to every man according to his works; and if salvation were of works, it could not be of grace. Paul has made this matter very plain: "To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. If by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."[2]

For the same reason that salvation is not of works, it is not of the law. The law is the rule of justice, and takes cognisance of men's works. If it gave life to men, it could be only on the ground of their obedience to its requirements; for its language is, "The man that doeth these things shall live by them."[3] Salvation by the law is declared to be impossible: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.[4] The Scriptures represent grace and law as opposed to each other: "The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."[5] "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"[6] "It is of faith, that it might be by grace."[7] Sometimes the term *law* is used in an extended sense; as when the law of faith is opposed to the law of works;[8] and the law of the spirit of life, to the law of sin and death.[9] Hence we read of "the perfect law of liberty,"[10] which cannot be the rule of justice: that says, "Cursed is every one

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[1] Eph. ii. 5, 7, 8; 2 Tim. i. 9; Rom. iii. 24; viii. 23; xi. 5, 6; ix. 15, 16.
[2] Rom. xi. 6. [3] Rom. x. 5. [4] Gal. iii. 21.
[5] John i. 17. [6] Gal. iii. 2. [7] Rom. iv. 16.
[8] Rom. iii. 27. [9] Rom. viii. 2. [10] James i. 25.

that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."[1] When the term *law* is used in this extended sense, it denotes the method of salvation by grace through faith, and is carefully distinguished from "the law of works."

The doctrine that salvation is of grace, is taught in the sacred Scriptures with great clearness. In the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, the declaration is twice made, "By grace ye are saved." Paul ascribed his own salvation to grace: "By the grace of God, I am what I am."[2] He traces the blessing of salvation to "the grace given in Christ Jesus, before the world began:"[3]—to "the riches of his grace:"[4]—to "the exceeding riches of his grace."[5]

Salvation is entirely of grace. The passages already quoted show that salvation is not partly of grace and partly of works. Grace and works are so opposed to each other, that, when it is affirmed to be of grace, it is denied to be of works: "Not of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." "Not according to our works; but according to his own purpose and grace."[6] The exclusion of all boasting,[7] was, that the blessing bestowed is entirely of grace: "Not of works, lest any man should boast."[8] Our works are wholly excluded; because they are all sinful, and can deserve nothing but the wrath of God. Faith renounces all reliance on our own works, all expectation of favor on their account; and asks and receives every blessing as the gift of divine grace through Jesus Christ. When salvation is so received, all boasting is effectually excluded.

That salvation is entirely of divine grace, may be argued from the condition in which the Gospel finds mankind. We are justly condemned, totally depraved, and, in ourselves, perfectly helpless. All this has been fully proved in a former chapter; is verified in the experience of every one who is awakened to a just view of his lost state; and precisely accords with the language of God to his ancient people: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help."[9] The second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians describes the condition of men by nature: "Children of wrath,"

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[1] Gal. iii. 10.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 10.
[3] 2 Tim. i. 9.
[4] Eph. i. 7.
[5] Eph. ii. 7.
[6] 2 Tim. i. 9.
[7] Rom. iii. 27.
[8] Eph. ii. 9.
[9] Hosea xiii. 9.

"dead in trespasses and sins," "without hope and without God;" and it attributes their deliverance from this wretched and hopeless condition, to the grace of God, who is rich in mercy: "But God, in his great love, wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together; and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." In the eagerness of his desire to impress the minds of the Ephesian Christians with a sense of their obligation to divine grace, before he reaches the conclusion of his argument, as if impatient to express the thought with which his own mind was so deeply impressed, he introduced it parenthetically, by anticipation, "By grace ye are saved." Afterwards, when his argument is completed, he repeats the declaration, and expands it to the utmost fulness of meaning, when he adds that faith itself is the gift of God. If the blessing bestowed is of faith, that it might be by grace, and if faith itself is the gift of God, it must be emphatically true that salvation is of grace.

The blessings which are bestowed in salvation, demonstrate that it is entirely of grace. We shall proceed to a particular consideration of these, in the sections which follow: but we may here, in a general view, comprehend them under two gifts, namely, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of Christ, to die for us, and to become to us the author of eternal salvation, is entirely of grace: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."[1] "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[2] "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"[3] Without the death of Christ, our salvation was impossible: and we had no claim on God to draw forth from him the gift of his well-beloved. He was freely given, of God's great love, wherewith he loved us: and as he was freely given, so all the blessings which flow through him are freely given also. If any man feels that Christ was under obligation to die for him, or that God was bound to give his Son to make the needed sacrifice for

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[1] John iii. 16. [2] Rom. v. 8. [3] Rom. viii. 32.

sin, he totally mistakes, on a point of vital importance to the salvation of his soul. The doctrine that salvation is of grace, is not a useless speculation; but it enters into the very heart of Christian experience; and the faith which does not recognise it, does not receive Christ as he is presented in the Gospel. It is, therefore, a matter of unspeakable importance, that our view of this truth should be clear, and that it should be cordially embraced by every power of our minds.

As the Son of God was freely given to effect our salvation by his death; so the Holy Spirit is freely given, to apply the salvation which the Son has wrought out: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."[1] We receive the Holy Spirit as a gift of the Father's love, who bestows it, as earthly parents give good things to their children.[2] And this gift is not bestowed because of merit in the recipient. Paul asks, "Received ye the Spirit, by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"[3] From this inquiry we learn that this gift also is of faith, that it might be by grace.[4] The Spirit is given in answer to the prayer of Christ: and being thus bestowed through Christ, it is one of the good things freely given together with Christ. We are encouraged to pray that God would give us his Holy Spirit: but our prayer cannot be acceptable, and will not be heard, if we ask the blessing as one which is justly due, and which we may demand as a right. When our humbled hearts plead that God would, in the exceeding riches of his grace, grant us his Holy Spirit, to renew and sanctify us, and fit us for his service, our petitions rise with acceptance to the ear of the Lord of hosts.

An objection to the views which have been presented, may arise from the fact, that, in the last day, men will be judged according to their works.[5] But the good works of the saints are the fruit of grace bestowed; and, although the sentence in the great day will be according to their works, the reward will nevertheless be of grace, and not of debt. Their works will be an evidence of their faith; and Christ, the Judge, will refer to them, as proof of love to him. The kingdom which he will bestow, will be, not a reward for the merit of their works, but an inheritance prepared

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[1] Rom. v. 5. [2] Luke xi. 13. [3] Gal. iii. 2.
[4] Rom. iv. 16. [5] Rev. xx. 12.

for them before the foundation of the world.[1] It will be as true on that day, as it is now, and it will be felt to be true by all the saints, that eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.[2]

Section I.—PARDON.

All who repent of sin obtain forgiveness through Jesus Christ.[3]

Forgiveness implies deliverance from the penalty due to sin. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness: and when men become sensible of the danger to which they are exposed, deliverance from the impending wrath becomes an object of intense solicitude. Hence arises an anxious desire to obtain forgiveness. To persons in this state of mind, the doctrine that there is forgiveness with God, is most welcome.

All forgiveness is bestowed through Jesus Christ. It is he who delivers from the wrath to come.[4] In him "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."[5] He had power on earth to forgive sins;[6] and he is now exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.[7] That we might be delivered from the penalty due to our sins, it was necessary that Christ should bear it for us. Hence it is true, that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission;[8] and hence, in the teachings of Scripture, the forgiveness of sins stands connected with redemption by the blood of Christ. With this agrees the language of the redeemed: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood."[9]

The blessing of forgiveness is bestowed on all who truly repent of their sins. This is taught in various passages of Scripture. "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.[10] "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."[11] Repentance and remission of sins[12] were preached in the name of Christ, and are associated blessings, bestowed by "the exalted Prince and Saviour."[13] When Jesus said, "Except ye

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[1] Matt. xxv. 34. [2] Rom. vi. 23.
[3] Isaiah lv. 7; Jer. iii. 12, 22; Luke xxiv. 46, 47; Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; v. 31.
[4] 1 Thess. i. 10. [5] Eph. i. 7. [6] Matt. ix. 6.
[7] Acts v. 31. [8] Heb. ix. 22. [9] Rev. i. 5.
[10] Acts iii. 19. [11] 1 John i. 9. [12] Luke xxiv. 47.
[13] Acts v. 31.

repent, ye shall all likewise perish,"[1] it was implied that, if they repented, they would escape. God, in the gospel, commands all men everywhere to repent, in view of the approaching judgment.[2] The hope of escape in that great day, is clearly held out to those who obey the command, and sincerely repent of their sins.

Forgiveness is sometimes represented in the Scriptures, as received by faith in Christ: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sin."[3] Repentance and faith are twin graces, proceeding from the same Holy Spirit, and wrought in the same heart; and, although they may be contemplated separately, they exist together, and the promise of forgiveness belongs to either of them.

In the New Testament, a connection appears, between the remission of sins and the ordinance of baptism. John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;[4] and Ananias commanded Saul, "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."[5] In the Old Testament, a similar connection appears, between remission and the sacrifices of that dispensation. "Almost all things were by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood is no remission."[6] Yet Paul has taught us that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin;[7] that these offerings were only figures of things to come; and that the only effectual removal of sin is by the blood of Christ. Baptism under the gospel, is as truly a figure, as the sacrifices were under the law. In the ceremonies instituted by Moses, the death of Christ was prefigured by the death of the slaughtered victims; and in the gospel ceremony, the burial and resurrection of Christ are figured forth in the ordinance of baptism: and in both cases, the remission connected with the ceremony is merely figurative. Our sins are washed away in baptism, in the same sense in which we eat the body and drink the blood of Christ, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper.[8] Baptism and the Lord's supper are duties to be performed under the gospel

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[1] Luke xiii. 3. [2] Acts xvii. 30. [3] Acts x. 43.
[4] Mark i. 4. [5] Acts xxii. 16. [6] Heb. ix. 22.
[7] Heb. ix. 13. [8] 1 Cor. x. 16.

dispensation; as the various ceremonies instituted by Moses, were duties under the former dispensation; but the figures ought not, in either case, to be confounded with the things which they represent. In a figure, baptism washes away sin: in reality, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." We must be careful not to rely on the figure, instead of the reality which it represents.

To escape the wrath to come, is the first desire of the awakened sinner; and mercy, mercy, forgive, forgive, are the first words uttered in his earnest prayers. Forgiveness is bestowed on repentance, and repentance is the first duty enjoined in the gospel. It is fit that the first blessing of grace which the sinner anxiously seeks, should be connected with the first duty required of him. It shows, on the one hand, the holiness of God, who will not pardon sin, except on the condition of the sinner's return to obedience; and, on the other, God's readiness to forgive, inasmuch as his wrath is averted at the first step of the sinner's return. He might have required that the sinner should undergo a long discipline of painful penance, and a long course of laborious service, as a condition of release from the indignation and wrath so long provoked. But God's readiness to forgive, is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son, by the conduct of the father, who, while his son was yet a great way off, ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him,[1] with free and full assurance of pardon and acceptance. Such is the love which God manifests to the returning sinner. It hastens to receive him on the first indication of true penitence. Nor is it a partial forgiveness which is then bestowed. The storm of divine wrath, which had been gathering over the sinner's head, during all his life of impenitence, is at once dispelled, and his sins, as a thick cloud, are at once blotted out.[2] To show the completeness of his pardon, his iniquities are represented as buried in the depths of the sea;[3] not in some shallow place, where an ebbing tide might leave them uncovered; but in the depths of the ocean, where, if they should be sought for, they could never be found. Such is God's forgiveness. Why are sinners so averse to seek it?

Although, on the first movement of a sinner in his return to God, the first blessing of divine grace is bestowed on him, so full,

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[1] Luke xv. 20. [2] Isaiah xliv. 22. [3] Mic. vii. 19.

so freely, so gloriously; it does not follow, that he may safely stop short in his progress. The doctrine of the saints' final perseverance, which we shall hereafter consider, is misunderstood and misapplied; if men take encouragement from it, to relax in their efforts to advance in the way of holiness. The blessing of forgiveness, and the exercise of repentance, are connected with each other, at the beginning of the divine life; and their connection remains throughout its progress. We have occasion to pray for forgiveness, as often as we pray for our daily bread,[1] and the prayer cannot be presented with a well grounded hope that it will be heard and answered, unless it proceed from a penitent heart. Penitence is as necessary to pardon, in the saint who is just finishing his warfare, and taking his departure for the other world, as it was in the first moment of his drawing near to God. Christ was exalted "to give repentance and remission of sins;" and if these do not accompany each other, they do not come from Christ. He who believes that all his sins, past and future, were forgiven at his first conversion, in such a sense that he may dispense with all subsequent penitence, and rest satisfied with his first forgiveness, has need to learn again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

Section II.—JUSTIFICATION.

ALL WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST, ARE JUSTIFIED BY HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED TO THEM.[2]

Justification is the act of a judge acquitting one who is charged with crime. It is the opposite of condemnation. In Deut. xxv. 1, the judges of Israel were commanded, in the discharge of their official duty, to justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

Justification is a higher blessing of grace, than pardon. The latter frees from the penalty due to sin, but it does not fully restore the lost favor of God. A pardoned criminal, and a just man who has committed no crime, stand on different ground. The distinction between pardon and justification may be illustrated by these words

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[1] Matt. vi. 11, 12.

[2] Acts xiii. 39; Rom. iii. 21, 22, 25, 26; x. 4; Gal. ii. 16; iii. 22, 24; Phil. iii. 8–10.

of Job, "God forbid that I should justify you."[1] If, in this passage, we should substitute the word pardon for justify, every one would perceive an important change in the meaning. This change shows the difference between pardon and justification. Such is the greatness of divine grace to the sinner who returns to God through Jesus Christ, that he is treated as if he had never sinned; and this is imported in the declaration that he is justified. We are, however, not to conceive of these as separate blessings. It is not true that one sinner is justified, and another merely pardoned: but every penitent believer is both pardoned and justified. As repentance and faith are duties mutually implying each other, so pardon and justification are twin blessings of grace, bestowed together through Jesus Christ. All whom Jesus delivers from the wrath to come are freely justified from all things, and presented faultless before the presence of his glory.

Justification is attributed, in the Scriptures, to the blood and the obedience of Christ: "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."[2] "By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous."[3] Both his blood and his obedience were necessary to magnify the law, and make it honorable. His blood signifies the endurance of its penalty; and his obedience, the fulfilment of its precepts. On his endurance of the penalty, our deliverance from wrath is based; and on his fulfilment of the precepts, our complete justification before God. Justification, however, could not be complete, without deliverance from the penalty; and it therefore required both the blood and the obedience of Christ; or, in the language of Scripture, "his obedience unto death."

Justification is by faith. On this point, the Scriptures are explicit. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God."[4] By him all that believe are justified from all things.[5] Faith does not justify, because of its own merit. Other graces co-exist with it in the heart of the believer; as repentance, love, &c. And these have equal claim to merit; and especially love, which is the fulfilling of the law,[6] but faith is selected as the justifying grace; and Paul assigns the reason, "It is of faith, that it might be by

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[1] Job xxvii. 5. [2] Rom. v. 9. [3] Rom. v. 19.
[4] Rom. v. 1. [5] Acts xiii. 39. [6] Rom. xiii. 10.

grace."[1] In the very exercise of faith, merit is renounced, and the sole reliance is placed on the merit of Christ. Hence faith is opposed to works: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."[2] In faith, the sinner as ungodly comes to God, who justifies the ungodly,[3] through Christ, who died for the ungodly.[4] He presents no plea, and entertains no hope, founded on personal merit, but relies wholly on the blood and obedience of Christ. Faith is an exercise of the believer's mind; and, as such, it is as much a work as repentance or love, and it produces other works: for, "Faith worketh by love."[5] But it is not as a work, or as producing other works, that faith justifies; but as renouncing all personal merit and self-reliance, and receiving salvation as a gift of free grace through Jesus Christ.

In justification, righteousness is imputed, accounted, or reckoned. "David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness.[6] Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness:[7] "For us, also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe."[8]

How God can justly account an ungodly man righteous, is a problem which it required infinite wisdom to solve. How it was solved Paul has informed us. Him hath "God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."[9] The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and faith in that sacrifice, are the means which God employs for the solution of the difficult problem: and these solve it completely; God himself, the perfectly just one, being judge. We may not be able fully to understand the solution, and perceive all its fitness and beauty; but we may learn much respecting it, from the light which the Scriptures throw on it; and, where we fail to comprehend, we ought patiently to wait for the further light which eternity will disclose.

When the Scriptures speak of justification by the obedience or

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[1] Rom. iv. 16. [2] Rom. iv. 5. [3] Rom. iv. 5.
[4] Rom. v. 6. [5] Gal. v. 6. [6] Rom. iv. 6.
[7] Rom. iv. 3. [8] Rom. iv. 24. [9] Rom. iii. 25, 26

blood of Christ, faith is supposed; otherwise, those passages which speak of justification by faith, would be without meaning. And in like manner, when they speak of justification by faith, the obedience and blood of Christ are supposed; otherwise, it would be unmeaning to say, "Justified by his blood:" "By his obedience many are made righteous." What Christ did and suffered, and also our faith in Christ, are necessary to effect our justification; and the part which each of these has in the process, is an interesting subject of inquiry.

We have already seen that faith does not justify as a meritorious work. If it justified on the ground of merit, it would need to possess sufficient merit to satisfy all the demands of the law, both preceptive and penal; and in that case the obedience and sufferings of Christ would be unnecessary. It is not jointly meritorious with the obedience and sufferings of Christ; for they are in themselves perfect: and, without addition from the works of the sinner, magnify the law and make it honorable. Christ, and Christ alone, is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.[1] Faith disclaims all merit of its own, but receives Christ as the propitiation that God has set forth, and, as the end of the law, fully satisfying all its claims. Faith distinguishes those to whom righteousness is imputed: "it is unto all, and upon all them that believe;"[2] but it is not, in itself, either in whole or in part, the meritorious cause of justification.

But merit is ascribed, in the word of God, to the obedience and sufferings of Christ. His blood is represented as a price paid, and a price of such value, that our deliverence from under the law may, on the ground of it, be justly claimed: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ."[3] "He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."[4]

"Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price."[5] As a commodity may be claimed, when its full value has been paid, and the purchase completed; so our deliverance from the condemnation of the law, and our justification before God, may be claimed on the merits of Christ's obedience and sufferings. Avenging justice is

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[1] Rom. x. 4. [2] Rom. iii. 22. [3] 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.
[4] Gal. iv. 5. [5] 1 Cor. vi. 19, 29.

satisfied: "He is the propitiation for our sins."[1] "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake."[2] He gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God of sweet smelling savor."[3]

When the Scriptures speak of Christ's blood as the ground of our justification, his obedience is supposed: and, on the other hand, when his obedience is mentioned, his sufferings are supposed. His obedience to the precepts of the law would not have sufficed, if he had not also endured its penalty: and if, while enduring his sufferings, he had not loved God with all his heart, his sacrifice would have been polluted. A lamb without spot was needed; and perfect obedience was therefore necessary to render his offering acceptable. His active and passive obedience are both necessary to make a complete salvation; and when only one is mentioned in the Scriptures, the other is supposed.

In being made under the law, Christ became our substitute; and his obedience and sufferings are placed to our account, as if we had personally obeyed and suffered, to the full satisfaction of the law. We are thus justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us: "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."[4] Our sins were imputed to Christ when he died for them; and his righteousness is imputed to us when we receive eternal life through him. He was treated as if he had personally committed the sins which were laid on him: and all who believe in him are treated as if they had personally rendered that satisfaction to the law which was rendered by his obedience and sufferings.

Nothing can be accounted the meritorious cause of justification, but the obedience and sufferings of Christ: yet faith is indispensable: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; and the wrath of God abideth on him."[5] By him all that believe are justified.[6] Faith, then, is the turning point, by which a sinner's condition is determined. In God's method of grace, all the benefits of Christ's satisfaction to the law are made over to the sinner, as soon as he believes: and faith, therefore, serves to him instead of a perfect personal obedience to the law. On his believing in Christ, he is treated as if he had personally rendered a perfect

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[1] 1 John ii. 2. [2] Isaiah xlii. 21. [3] Eph. v. 2.
[4] 2 Cor. v. 21. [5] John iii. 36. [6] Acts xiii. 39.

obedience to the law: and this is the import of those Scriptures which say that faith is imputed to him for righteousness. It is not so imputed, because of any merit which it possesses; but because it is that which the Gospel recognises in the sinner as entitling him to the full satisfaction that Christ has rendered. When faith is said to be imputed for righteousness, the obedience and sufferings of Christ, on which faith lays hold, are viewed as connected with it, and constituting the meritorious ground of its acceptance.

That the sin or righteousness of one should be imputed to another, has been thought by some to be inconsistent with the principles of justice, the province of which is, to give to every man his due. From some cause, the notion of imputation has prevailed in all ages, in the sacrifices which have been offered, both by divine authority and by heathen worshippers. This notion has the full authority of God's word, and evidently lies at the foundation of the salvation which infinite wisdom and goodness have provided for guilty men. It would, therefore, be extreme folly in us to reject this salvation because of an objection which may arise to our erring reason, in determining the abstract principles of justice. There is no higher rule of justice than God himself; and what the Judge of all does, must be right.

In explaining the imputation of Adam's sin, we showed that there is a threefold union between Adam and his posterity, rendering the imputation of his sin to them an act of justice. There is, in like manner, a threefold union between Christ and his people, rendering the imputation of their sin to him, and of his righteousness to them, consistent with justice.

1. There is a union *of consent.* Christ consented to the righteousness of the law, in its condemnation of his people, and to the necessity of satisfaction: and they do the same. He consented to become a substitute for them, and render the required satisfaction in their behalf: and they joyfully accept the favor. While in impenitence and unbelief, they do not approve the law, or its sentence, and do not acknowledge the obligation to make satisfaction. When they become sensible of this obligation, the first effort is to make satisfaction in their own persons. In this state of mind their consent with Christ is only partial; and the Gospel does not pronounce them justified. But when they become con-

vinced of their utter inability to render satisfaction in their own persons, they give themselves up to Christ, and not only consent, but pray to be found in him, not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith.

How the union of Christ and his people rendered it just in God to inflict the penalty of their sins on him, and to justify them, we cannot claim fully to understand. God knows well what his moral government requires; and as he has approved the arrangement, we may be sure it must be right. We may hope to obtain further knowledge of this glorious mystery when the counsels of infinite wisdom are unfolded to our view in the future world.

But even here we may see, in part, a fitness in the procedure. Without the consent of Christ, we cannot suppose that justice would have laid our iniquities on him: and, without the consent to be saved by him, which faith yields, we cannot understand how justice would have been honored in our being justified. As the consent of Adam's descendants to the deed of their father, in rebelling against the law of his Sovereign, justifies the imputation of his sin to them; so the consent of Christ and his people to the divine scheme of grace, justifies what is done to them both in the execution of the scheme.

2. There is a *spiritual* union. As Adam was the natural head of his posterity, so Christ is the spiritual head of his people. Adam's descendants are born from him according to the flesh, and possess the nature which existed in him as its beginning or fountain. Christ's people are born of the Spirit, and possess the spirit which was in Christ without measure; so that, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."[1] This union is like that of the head and members of the human body: and by one spirit believers are all baptised into this one body."[2] It is like the union of the vine and its branches; through all which the same vitalizing and fructifying sap circulates. This union secures the perfect consent, which has already been noticed, between Christ and his people; and further illustrates the fitness of that arrangement by which they are regarded as one in the administration of God's moral government.

3. There is a *federal* union. As Adam was the federal head

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[1] Rom. viii. 9. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

and representative of his descendants; so Christ stood, in the covenant of grace, as the federal head and representative of all whom the Father gave to him. For their sakes he undertook the work of mediation; and for their sakes he did and suffered all that was necessary to the full execution of the work. Justice, and every other attribute of the divine nature, concurred in the arrangement, by which he was to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; and by the knowledge of him to justify many.[1] And now, justice, and every other attribute of the divine nature, fully sanction the arrangement, by which his righteousness is imputed to all his elect people, on their believing in him. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died."[2]

The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, is an act of justice; the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, is an act of grace. The former is on the proper level of justice; but the latter rises above it. Justice has nothing to say against it, but, on the contrary, is fully satisfied and abundantly honored by it; yet the plan did not originate in the justice, but in the love, of God, which provided the needed sacrifice. This distinction ought never to be forgotten. If our condemnation, in our natural state, is not just, our deliverance from it is of debt, and not of grace. When we feel, in every power of our minds, that we are justly condemned before God, and that his wrath is our righteous due; we can then receive Christ and salvation by him, as the gift of God, the free gift, the unspeakable gift, of his grace.

The Apostle James says: "A man is justified by works, and not by faith only."[3] In this he appears, at first view, to contradict the words of Paul: "A man is justified by faith, without deeds of the law."[4] James has assigned a reason, which furnishes a clue that leads to a perfect reconciliation of this apparent contradiction: "For," says he, "faith without works is dead."[5] Faith alone, is dead faith; and dead faith, according to his teaching, does not justify; and this doctrine, Paul does not contradict. The justifying faith of Paul, is living, working faith. He says expressly: "Faith works by love."[6] James does not exclude faith from justification;

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[1] Isaiah liii. 11. [2] Rom. viii. 33, 34. [3] James ii. 24.
[4] Rom. iii. 28. [5] James ii. 17. [6] Gal. v. 6.

but, on the contrary, introduces works, not as excluding faith, but as making it perfect: "By works was faith made perfect."[1] As thus perfected, faith justifies, according to his teaching: and this is precisely what Paul teaches. The works which Paul excludes are not works of faith, but works of law—not works, evidencing the genuineness and vitality of faith; but works, claiming to be, in whole, or in part, the meritorious cause of justification. Such works are excluded, because they would imply an imperfection in Christ's work, and give the sinner a ground of glorying. It is manifest that James insists on works, merely as evidences of faith: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."[2] Even words, as well as works, are necessary, to give evidence of faith: "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."[3] So far as words prove the presence or absence of faith, it is true, that, "By thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."[4] But words without works, avail nothing; for Christ teaches that, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."[5] And words and works together, avail nothing, without faith; for, whatever a man may say or do, if he believe not, he "shall be damned."

A difference of opinion has existed as to the proper date of justification. Some have regarded the day of judgment as its proper date. It is an act of God, as Judge; and, in the judgment of the great day, the Judge will publicly pronounce, on every individual, the sentence which will determine his condition through eternity. Then God's judgments will be fully revealed; but a partial revelation of them is made in the present life: "Even now, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."[6] It is true, "He that believeth not, *shall be* damned;"[7] but it is also true, "He that believeth not, *is condemned already*."[8] In like manner, it is true that Christ will publicly own his people in the great day, and pronounce the final sentence in their favor;

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[1] James ii. 22. [2] James ii. 18. [3] Rom. x. 10.
[4] Matt. xii. 37. [5] Matt. vii. 21. [6] Rom. i. 18.
[7] Mark xvi. 16. [8] John iii. 18.

but it is also true, that they are justified in the present life. Hence Paul says: "Ye *are justified* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."[1] "All that believe *are justified* from all things."[2] The same rule by which the eternal state of men will be determined in the great day, is now made known on the authority of him who will sit on the throne of judgment then, and who is now the Judge of all the earth. By this revelation, men are already condemned or justified, according to their character. That character is often secret here. In the great day, God will judge the secrets of all hearts; but he will not establish a new rule of judgment: so far as that rule has been correctly applied here, its decision will be confirmed in the last day by the final sentence.

Some have dated justification in eternity past, regarding it as grace given in Christ Jesus before the world began. Justification is not a secret purpose in the bosom of God, but a revelation from him, and therefore it cannot be eternal. It implies, not only the accounting of the sinner righteous, but the declaring of him righteous; otherwise, it would not be the opposite of condemnation; and neither justification nor condemnation can be from eternity. God's purpose to justify is eternal, and so is his purpose to glorify; but it is as improper to say that believers are justified from eternity, as to say that they are glorified from eternity. It is clearly the doctrine of Scripture, that, on believing in Christ, men pass from a state of condemnation into a state of justification.

Section III.—ADOPTION.

God adopts, as sons, all who believe in Jesus Christ.[3]

In adoption, as practised among men, an individual receives the son of another into his family, and confers on him the same privileges and advantages, as if he were his own son. In this sense, God adopts all who believe in Jesus Christ: "We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ."[4] "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God."[5] This blessing of grace rises higher than justifi-

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[1] 1 Cor. vi. 11. [2] Acts xiii. 39.
[3] John i. 12; Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iii.26; 1John iii. 1, 2.
[4] Gal. iii. 26. [5] 1 John iii. 1

cation. Though a judge may fully acquit one who is arraigned before him on a charge of crime, he does not confer, on the man so acquitted, any of the privileges or advantages which belong to a son. But the believer in Jesus is permitted to regard God, not only as a justifying Judge, but as a reconciled and affectionate Father. The problem, how he can be put among the children,[1] has been solved. Though once afar off, he has been brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and made of the household of God.[2]

Among the privileges and advantages which adoption secures, we may enumerate the following:

1. The love of God, as a kind Father, is secured to believers. The Scriptures frequently exhibit the love of God to his people, under the figure of a Father's love to his children: "As a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."[3] "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him."[4] "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."[5] Corresponding with this encouraging and delightful exhibition of God's love, is the confidence with which the believer in Christ is inspired to approach his heavenly Father: "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father."[6] Hence Christ habitually spoke to his disciples of God as their Father, and, before he left them, said, in language full of endearment and encouragement: "I ascend to my Father and your Father;"[7] and hence he taught them to say, in their daily prayers: "Our Father, who art in heaven."[8]

2. The discipline of God, as a kind and wise Father, is secured to all who believe in Jesus: "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."[9] "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live?"[10] "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be

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[1] Jer. iii. 19.
[2] Eph. ii. 13, 19.
[3] Ps. ciii. 13.
[4] Matt. vii. 11. John xx. 17.
[5] Matt. vi. 32.
[6] Rom. viii. 15.
[7] Matt. vi. 9.
[8] Heb. xii. 6.
[9] Heb. xii. 9.

partakers of his holiness."[1] Inestimably rich is this blessing of divine discipline. Let the wealthy and noble of the earth rejoice in the advantages which give them distinction among men, and supply them with the means of carnal enjoyment; but let the afflicted believer in Jesus, rejoice in the lot which God has assigned him, because it has been chosen for him by a Father who knows what is best for him, and who loves him so tenderly as to withhold from him no good thing. Having all good in heaven and earth at his disposal, he has selected that portion for each of his children on earth, which will best promote their highest interest.

3. Believers in Christ are made heirs of God: "If children, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."[2] God, the creator of all things, is the proprietor of all things, and his adopted children are made heirs of this vast estate. "He that overcometh, shall inherit all things."[3] "All things are yours, and Christ is appointed heir of all things; and believers are co-heirs with him."[4]

The inheritance of God's children, is frequently represented as a kingdom: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."[5] "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom."[6]

The adoption of believers does not take full effect in the present life: "We are waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body;" "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God."[7] Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom; and, therefore, this vile body must be changed, and fashioned like the glorious body of Christ, before we can receive the glory and joy which God has prepared for us. Yet the title to the inheritance is made sure, since we are co-heirs with Christ; and the promise and oath of God, two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie,[8] give to the heirs of promise, the strongest possible assurance, that they shall receive the inheritance: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."[9] Though now in exile, and pilgrims and strangers in the earth, perhaps despised and forsaken, we are the children

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[1] Heb. xii. 10. [2] Rom. viii. 17. [3] Rev. xxi .7.
[4] 1 Cor. iii. 22. [5] Luke xii. 32. [6] Matt. xxv 34.
[7] Rom. viii. 19. [8] Heb. vi. 18. [9] 1 John iii 2.

of God, and heirs of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away. Even now, whatever may be our poverty, affliction, or reproach, we are the objects of our Father's care, and he gives us, as an earnest of the future inheritance, so much of it in present enjoyment, as he sees to be best for us. All things within the boundless dominion of Jehovah, work together for good, to them that love God.[1]

Section IV.—REGENERATION.

In all who are finally saved, the Holy Spirit produces a great moral change, by which they become inclined to holiness.[2]

In our natural state we are totally depraved. No inclination to holiness exists in the carnal heart; and no holy act can be performed, or service to God rendered, until the heart is changed. This change, it is the office of the Holy Spirit to effect. Pardon, justification, and adoption, are changes in a man's condition; but if no other change were wrought, the man would remain a slave to sin, and unfit for the service and enjoyment of God. Grace, therefore, does not stop with a mere change of condition, but it effects also that change in the character, without which the individual could not participate in the holy enjoyments of heaven, or be fitted for the society of the blessed.

Various forms of expression are employed in the Scriptures, to denote the change of heart; and they signify it with various shades of meaning. It is taking away the heart of stone, and giving a heart of flesh;[3] giving a new heart;[4] putting the law in the heart;[5] quickening or making alive;[6] a resurrection from the dead; an illumination;[7] a conversion, or turning back to God.[8] So great is the change produced, that the subject of it is called a new creature,[9] as if proceeding, like Adam, directly from the

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[1] Rom. viii. 28.

[2] John iii. 5, 6; Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26, 27; xxxvii. 14; Tit. iii. 5; James i. 18; 2 Cor. v. 17; 1 John iv. 8.

[3] Ezek. xxxvi. 26. [4] Ezek. xviii. 31. [5] Heb. viii. 10.

[6] John vi. 63; Eph. ii. 1; Rom. vi. 11, 13. [7] Heb. x. 32.

[8] Ps. li. 13; Matt. xviii. 3; Ps. xxv. 16; Isaiah lix. 20.

[9] 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

creating hand of God; and he is said to be renewed,[1] as being restored to the image of God, in which man was originally formed. With reference to the mode in which the descendants of Adam come into the world, the change is denominated regeneration;[2] and the subjects of it are said to be born again.[3]

The change is moral. The body is unchanged; and the identity of the mind is not destroyed. The individual is conscious of being the same person that he was before; but a new direction is given to the active powers of the mind, and new affections are brought into exercise. The love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.[4] No love to God had previously existed there; for the carnal heart is enmity against God. Love is the fulfilling of the law, the principle of all holy obedience; and when love is produced in the heart, the law of God is written there. As a new principle of action, inciting to a new mode of life, it renders the man a new creature. The production of love in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is the regeneration, or the new birth; for "he that loveth, is born of God.[5]

The mode in which the Holy Spirit effects this change, is beyond our investigation. All God's ways are unsearchable; and we might as well attempt to explain how he created the world, as how he new-creates the soul. With reference to this subject, the Saviour said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[6]

We know, from the Holy Scriptures, that God employs his truth in the regeneration of the soul. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."[7] Love to God necessarily implies knowledge of God, and this knowledge it is the province of truth to impart. But knowledge is not always connected with love. The devils know, but do not love; and wicked men delight not to retain the knowledge of God,[8] because their knowledge of him is not connected with love. The mere presentation of the truth to the mind, is not all that is needed, in producing love to God in the

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[1] Col. iii. 10; Rom. xii. 2; Tit. iii. 5.
[2] Tit. iii. 5.
[3] John iii. 3, 7; 1 Pet. i. 23.
[4] Rom. v. 5.
[5] 1 John iv. 7.
[6] John iii. 8.
[7] James i. 18.
[8] Rom. i. 28.

heart. What accompanying influence the Holy Spirit uses, to render the word effectual, we cannot explain: but Paul refers to it, when he says, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost."[1]—"but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power."[2]

The term regeneration is sometimes used in a comprehensive sense, as including the whole formation of the Christian character. At other times it is used for the first production of divine love in the heart. In the latter sense, the work is instantaneous. There is a moment known only to God, when the first holy affection exists in the soul. Truth may enter gradually, and may excite strong affections in the mind, and may for a time increase the hatred of God which naturally reigns in the heart. So Paul says, "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence."[3] But, in his own time and manner, God, the Holy Spirit, makes the word effectual in producing a new affection in the soul: and, when the first movement of love to God exists, the first throb of spiritual life commences.

Faith is necessary to the Christian character; and must therefore precede regeneration, when this is understood in its widest sense. Even in the restricted sense, in which it denotes the beginning of the spiritual life, faith, in the sense in which James[4] uses the term, may precede. But a faith which exists before the beginning of spiritual life, cannot be a living faith. Yet some have maintained that faith produces love. This opinion is of sufficient importance to demand a careful consideration.

The power of faith over the actions, the conscience, and the affections of the heart, every one must admit. Confidence placed in a treacherous man, has often led to a course of action ruinous in its effects on the condition and character. A belief in false principles of morality blinds the conscience, and causes it to approve the wrong, and condemn the right. We may love or hate an individual, under a mistaken view of his character; and our affection towards him may be completely changed, by a better acquaintance with him. Now, it may be asked, does not dislike

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[1] 1 Thess. i. 5.
[2] 1 Cor. ii. 4.
[3] Rom. vii. 8.
[4] James ii. 17.

of God proceed from a wrong view of his character, and will not a true knowledge of him infallibly produce love?

That hatred of God, and a wrong view of his character, accompany each other, no one can deny; but which of these produces the other, ought not to be assumed without investigation. We readily judge well concerning those whom we love, and ill concerning those whom we dislike. Men's interests pervert their judgments. In a deliberative assembly, parties are formed, according to the interests of individuals; and men take sides according to the circumstances which influence the heart. In these cases, the affections control the faith. The affections and the faith mutually influence each other, and if either be wrong, the other cannot be perfectly right. The enmity to God which rules in the hearts of unregenerate men, renders their view of his character incorrect. A perfectly correct view cannot co-exist with enmity to him: and yet it does not follow that love to him may be produced, by giving right views of his character.

Some have maintained the opinion that a revelation of God's love to us is sufficient to produce love to him. That it ought to do so, cannot be denied; and in a heart under no evil bias, it would produce this effect. We may rather say, that a heart in which no evil bias exists, will love God, on receiving a revelation of his general character, without waiting for evidence of special favor. If our love to God proceeds from a belief that he loves us in particular, it is merely a modification of self-love. Such love has no moral excellence in it; for "sinners love those that love them."[1] Some have supposed, that the faith of devils differs from the faith of Christians in the circumstance, that it sees in God no manifestation of love towards them, and therefore can produce no love in their hearts towards God. But this opinion regards the faith which distinguishes the people of God, and purifies their hearts, as possessing no moral excellence in its nature. The circumstances in which it is exercised, do not make its nature better. If it may consist with perfect hatred to God, it cannot have moral excellence in itself, or tend to produce moral purity.

An inspired writer has said, "We love him, because he first loved us:"[2] but these words do not teach, that our love to God

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[1] Luke vi. 32. [2] 1 John iv. 19.

originates in the conviction that we are the favorites of his love. The love of God towards us, operates both as an efficient, and as a motive. 1. As an efficient cause. "For his great love where with he loved us,[1] when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ." Here is an operation entirely distinct from that of mere motive. The dead body of Christ in the grave, was quickened by the Spirit; and a like power quickens the dead soul. "We believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead."[2] Here faith itself is ascribed to this divine operation. All this operation proceeds from God's great love wherewith he hath loved us. It is plain, therefore, that this love operates as an efficient cause, before it operates as a motive to holiness. It cannot operate as a motive without faith; and faith is produced by its efficient power. After this efficiency has quickened the dead soul, the love of God towards us then operates. 2. As a motive. The goodness of God leads to repentance, and every attribute and act of God has a tendency to call forth the love of the heart, when in the right state. Nothing so effectually melts the heart, as a view of God's great love towards us, while we were yet sinners: and of Christ's love in giving himself for us: but many a heart has felt this melting influence, without having in view the personal benefit to be received from this love. Our love to God does not produce a disregard to our own happiness, but it rises above the consideration of it. It is, therefore, not a modification of self-love.

This divine operation, which is additional to the motive power of truth, proceeds from what has been called the direct influence of the Spirit. Truth, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, is a revelation from the Holy Spirit; and as men's words, whether spoken or written, have an influence on the minds of other men, so the words of the Holy Spirit have an influence on the minds of all who read the Bible, or hear the gospel preached. In this indirect way, the Holy Spirit operates on men's minds, as the author of a book operates on all who read his work. But this indirect influence is by means of truth as a motive power; and no mere motive, operating on the sinner's heart, can induce him to love God for his own sake. While self-love rules in the mind, all

[1] Eph. ii. 4, 5. [2] Eph. i. 19. 20

motives derive their power from their relation to the ruling principle; and cannot, therefore, establish a higher principle of action. This change, by which true love to God is produced, results from the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, accompanying his word, and making it effectual. It was this direct influence which rendered the word so effectual on the day of Pentecost,[1] which opened Lydia's heart,[2] so that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul;—which gave the increase when Paul planted, and Apollos watered,[3]—and which has ever brought the word to the heart, in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.[4]

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit's direct influence, is a fundamental truth of the gospel dispensation. That Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, and completed the great work for which he assumed our nature, is a truth that lies at the foundation of Christianity. The gospel reveals to us the Spirit as well as the Son. When about to leave the world, Jesus promised another Comforter, who should dwell with his disciples for ever. The Holy Spirit, as God, had always been in the world: but he was now to be present by a peculiar manifestation and operation. This manifestation and operation attended the ministry of the Word on the day of Pentecost, and the gospel has always been the sword of the Spirit,[5] the instrument with which he operates in the fulfilment of his office for which he has come into the world, in answer to the prayer of Christ.

The experience of mankind, before the coming of Christ, prepared the way for the introduction of his religion. The wise men of the world had sought to know God, but their laborious research had been ineffectual. Some other means of knowledge was, by their failure, proved to be necessary: "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."[6] While an experiment was made in the heathen world, demonstrating the necessity of revelation, another was in progress among the people of Israel, under the Mosaic dispensation, demonstrating the inefficiency of revelation, unless accompanied by direct influence of the Holy Spirit. The Israelites had this great advantage over the

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[1] Acts ii. [2] Acts xvi. [3] 1 Cor. iii.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 4. [5] Eph. vi. 17. [6] 1 Cor. i. 21.

heathen world, that to them were committed the oracles of God.[1] The Scriptures, given by inspiration from God, were in their possession: and God spoke to them at sundry times and in divers manners, by prophets whom he raised up among them, and inspired to declare his will. That these prophets, with their burdens of divine messages, might arrive in due time, God represents himself as rising up early and sending them.[2] So abundant were the means of religious knowledge granted them, that God said, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"[3] Yet, with all this advantage, they turned away from the God of Israel, and provoked him to anger. Another influence was needed, to produce love and obedience to God. Hence it was said, by the prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah."[4] This new covenant is explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews,[5] to be the spiritual dispensation of the gospel. Its grand peculiarity is, that the law of God is written in the heart. The Israelites had the revelation from God written on stone and parchment, but it was not in their hearts; and a new divine influence was needed to put it there. This new divine influence was promised by the prophet, and the promise has been fulfilled in the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, the gift of which characterizes the gospel dispensation as the ministration of the Spirit.[6] The saints of God, under the former dispensation, received this influence of the Holy Spirit, and to them also was the gospel preached.[7] The privileges and blessings of the future dispensation, were, by anticipation, bestowed on them; and the Christ to come was made their Saviour, as if he had already appeared and fulfilled his work. But the abundant influence of the Holy Spirit was reserved for the times following the ascension of Christ, and from that day he dwells in the Church, and makes the bodies of believers his temple. This peculiar presence implies the peculiar influence by which the truth is put into the heart; that is, by which men are made to love the truth. The whole Mosaic dispensation was an experiment, demonstrating the

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[1] Rom. iii. 2. [2] Jer. xxxii. 33. [3] Isaiah v. 4.
[4] Jer. xxxiii. 14. [5] Heb. viii. [6] 2 Cor. iii. 8.
[7] Heb. iv. 2; Gal. iii. 8.

necessity of this peculiar influence. That covenant did not promise this blessing, and God found fault with it, because it did not secure the obedience of his people. The experiment was made, in his wisdom, not for his information, but for our benefit; and, by the failure of that covenant, we are enabled better to estimate the value of the blessing that distinguishes the covenant founded on better promises.

That philosophy which shuts God out of his creation, and substitutes laws of nature for his ever-present influence and operation, stands ready to deny the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's direct influence. It admits not the possibility of any influence, but that which the means employed naturally tend to produce. But means have no natural efficiency apart from the will of God. By the will of God, the truth has its regenerating and sanctifying power; for he works in us to will and to do, according to his pleasure.[1] It belongs to the Holy Spirit, in the economy of grace, to produce divine life in the soul, as he brooded over the face of the waters, at creation, reducing the chaotic mass to order, and filling it with life. He is pleased to work with means; and he employs the truth as his instrument of operation. This instrument he wields at his pleasure, and he renders it effectual by his divine power: "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."[2] By the ordinary providence of God, the Bible operates in the world, and influences the minds of men: but this providence equally existed in the former dispensation, in which the oracles of God were possessed by the Israelites, but held by them in unrighteousness. An influence above the ordinary providence of God is needed, to the regeneration of the soul. The coming of Christ into the world, and the coming and abiding of the Holy Spirit, belong to a dispensation which is above the ordinary providence of God. Into this new economy we are ushered, when we are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Here we recognise both the Son and the Spirit, as specially given of God. It is contrary to the faith of the gospel to regard Christ and his redeeming work, as things of God's ordinary providence; and it is equally

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[1] Phil. ii. 13. [2] Isaiah lv. 11.

contrary to faith to consider the Spirit and his work in the heart as merely natural influence of the truth on the heart.

Section V.—SANCTIFICATION.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONTINUES TO SANCTIFY THOSE WHOM HE HAS REGENERATED, AND FINALLY PREPARES THEM FULLY FOR THE HOLY SERVICE AND ENJOYMENT OF HEAVEN.[1]

Regeneration is the beginning of sanctification, but the work is not completed at the outset. A new affection is produced in the heart, but it does not govern without opposition. The love of the world, the love of self, and all the carnal appetites and passions, have reigned in the heart; and the power of habit gives them a controlling influence, which is not readily yielded. Hence arises the warfare of which every regenerate man is conscious: the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.[2] In this struggle, the carnal propensities often threaten to prevail, and they would prevail, if God did not give a supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. "Without me," said Jesus, "ye can do nothing."[3] If severed from the living vine, the branches are sapless, fruitless, dead. But "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit;"[4] and the Spirit of life from Christ, the head, flows through all the members of his body, and gives and preserves their vitality. This Spirit in them lusteth against the flesh, and enables them to carry on their warfare, and gives them final victory: "He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."[5]

As in the beginning, so in the progress of the work, the Holy Spirit operates by direct and by indirect influence. The indirect influence is by means of the truth. With reference to this, the Saviour prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth;"[6] and, with reference to it, the Scriptures connect "belief of the truth," with "sanctification of the Spirit;"[7] and speak of the heart being purified by faith.[8] The direct influence fixes the affections on the truth; or, in the language of Scripture, "writes the law in the heart."[9]

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[1] 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2; 1 Cor. vi. 11; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Mal. iii. 3; Eph. v. 26; Tit. ii. 14; Prov. iv. 18; Phil. i. 6; 1 John iii. 2.

[2] Gal. v. 17. [3] John xv. 5. [4] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

[5] Phil. i. 6. [6] John xvii. 17. [7] 2 Thess. ii. 13.

[8] Acts xv. 9. [9] Heb. x. 16.

The mode in which this direct influence is exerted, we cannot explain; but the result is, that the truth produces its proper effect, which otherwise it would fail to accomplish, through the depravity of the heart. Our carnal affections tend to shut out the truth from the heart; hence Christ said: "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"[1] While carnal affections tend to prevent the proper influence of the truth, the Spirit exercises an opposite influence, and "lusts against the flesh." As this influence gives the word an efficacy which it would not otherwise possess, it is something superadded to the intrinsic power of the word. For this direct influence, the Psalmist prays: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;"[2] and for this, the prayers recorded in the New Testament were offered: "Lord, increase our faith."[3] "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."[4] This influence operated on the two disciples, when their understandings were opened, that they understood the Scriptures.[5] This influence is prayed for by every child of God, when, as he opens the Bible, he prays that what he is about to read, may be blessed to the good of his soul. And it is prayed for by the faithful minister of the gospel, and by every devout hearer, when at the beginning of a sermon, they ask God to make his truth effectual.

Besides the word of truth, the dispensations of Providence are used by the Holy Spirit, as means of sanctification. Afflictions are often blessed to the spiritual good of God's people. David says: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word."[6] These afflictions are chastisements which our heavenly Father employs, to make us partakers of his holiness."[7] In themselves, afflictions have no sanctifying efficacy, and many who are tried by them, are incited to greater hatred of God; but the Holy Spirit accompanies them to the believer with a sanctifying power, and uses them to wean his affections from the world, and fix them on God. When outward things either cease to give him enjoyment, or produce positive grief and pain, he finds within him a source of happiness, in the exercise of faith and hope in God. Hence, in his darkest hours, as to worldly prosperity, the believer

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[1] John. v. 44. [2] Ps. cxix. 18. [3] Luke xvii. 5.
[4] Mark ix. 24. [5] Luke xxiv. 45. [6] Ps. cxix. 67.
[7] Heb. xii. 10.

sometimes finds his prospects of heaven most clear, and his foretaste of future blessedness most delightful.

Section VI.—FINAL PERSEVERANCE.

We have said, that the Holy Spirit continues to sanctify those whom he has regenerated. In consequence of this, they persevere in a course of holy obedience to the end of life. Whatever struggles it may cost, and whatever temporary departures from the straight line of duty may mark their course, they are graciously preserved from total and final apostacy. This truth may be proved by the following arguments:

1. By the will of God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, that which is produced in regeneration, is immortal. This is signified by the language of the Scriptures: "The hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible."[1] "Being born of the incorruptible."[2] "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him."[3] Grace in the heart is here represented as incorruptible and abiding, and as securing its possessor from sin, that is, from a life of sin, such as unregenerate men pursue. The same truth is taught in these words of Christ: "He that believeth, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."[4] The new life which grace produces, is in the present possession of the believer, and is here called everlasting. Its perpetuity is asserted in another form, in the words "Neither shall he come into condemnation." If one who has been made a new creature, and justified by faith, can return to the state from which divine grace has rescued him, he will come again into condemnation; but this is declared in these words of the infallible teacher, to be impossible: "If they who have passed from death to life, may return again to death, their present life is not everlasting;" and the assurance, neither shall come into condemnation, is groundless. The same truth is exhibited in another light, in these words of Paul: "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no dominion over him; likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto

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[1] 1 Pet. iii. 4.
[2] 1 Pet. i. 23.
[3] 1 John iii. 9.
[4] John v. 24.

sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."[1] Here believers are taught to account the new life which they have received, to be like the life of Christ, raised from the dead. As death hath no more dominion over him, the resemblance would fail in a most important particular, if their spiritual life were not immortal. As death can have no more dominion over the risen Saviour, so, death can have no more dominion over those who, in regeneration, have passed from death to life, and have been raised up together with Christ.

2. The union of believers with Christ is indissoluble. His love holds them fast. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ," &c.[2] "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end."[3] "His power holds them fast; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."[4] Such is their union to him, that their life is said to be in him, and he is called their life.[5] The life of the risen Jesus, is the life of his people, and such is their union with him, as to render this life operative in them: "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."[6] As his death was efficacious to bring us into a state of reconciliation with God, his life, now that he has been raised from the dead, and is ever living to make intercession for us, and is the source of our life, hid in the Godhead, will much more preserve us in this state of reconciliation, and secure our final and complete salvation.

3. The promises of God secure our preservation in Christ. When the new covenant is made with believers, by writing the law in their hearts, the accompanying promise is: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."[7] It is true that the Israelites were once accounted the people of God; and that they departed from God, and were rejected by him; and the same departure and rejection might happen to believers in Christ, if they were under the same covenant. But God found fault with the old covenant precisely on this ground, that it did not secure his people from disobedience and rejection: "Because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not."[8] Having found fault with this covenant, which did not put the law in their hearts, and

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[1] Rom. vi. 9, 11. [2] Rom. viii. 35–39. [3] John xiii. 1.
[4] John x. 28. [5] Col. iii. 3, 4. [6] Rom. v. 10.
[7] Heb. viii. 10. [8] Heb. viii. 9.

secure them from rejection, he abolishes that covenant, and makes a new one, founded on better promises: "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."[1] "Believers are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation;"[2] and the power which keeps them through faith, keeps that faith in existence and exercise, or it would fail to preserve them. This preservation of their faith, follows from the intercession of Christ,[3] who prayed for Peter, that his faith should not fail; and as he ever liveth to make intercession,[4] the preservation of faith is secured by the continued supplies of his grace, which otherwise would not be sufficient for his people. It is manifest that Paul entertained these views, when he wrote to the Philippians: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."[5]

4. Final apostasy, when it does occur, is accounted for, in the Scriptures, on the ground that there was an absence of true religion. This is clearly expressed by John: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."[6] With this agrees the teaching of Christ, in the parable of the seed sown in different kinds of ground, and explained by him of the word in its effect on different classes of hearers. The stony ground hearers "in time of temptation fell away,"[7] because the seed had not much depth of earth. There may be much appearance of religion where it does not really exist. Some, the Saviour has informed us, will seek to enter in, saying: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works?" These applicants are rejected, not on the ground that their plea was false. Their profession of Christ, and their prophesying, and working of miracles, in his name, are not denied: but the ground of this rejection is stated in these words: "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. I never knew you."[8] Now, if any of them had ever been true followers

[1] Jer. xxxii. 40. [2] 1 Pet. i. 5. [3] Luke xxii. 32.
[4] Heb. vii. 25. [5] Phil. i. 6. [6] 1 John ii. 19.
[7] Luke viii. 13. [8] Matt. vii. 23.

of Christ, he must have known them as such, and therefore he could not say: "I *never* knew you."

The text last considered, may assist us in explaining a passage in which many have found difficulty: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance."[1] Apostasy, after great attainments in religion, is here supposed; but these apostates had never been true disciples of Christ, distinguished by love to him, and works of holy obedience. In immediate connection with his account of them, Paul addresses true Christians thus: "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak, for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love."[2] The work and labor of love will be acknowledged by him in the great day, when the workers of iniquity will be rejected, whatever knowledge of divine things they may have possessed, and whatever miraculous gifts they may have been endowed with. The superiority of love to all knowledge, miraculous gifts, and all outward works, however costly and self-denying, is clearly taught in 1 Cor. xiii., and we are assured that all these, where love is wanting, will avail nothing. Hence all these, if without love, will not preserve from apostasy in this life, nor from rejection in the last day.

In a practical use of this and some other passages, the minds of many have been distressed with the apprehension that they had committed the unpardonable sin. For their relief, it is important to observe, that the difficulty in the way of the salvation of the apostates here described, consists in the impossibility of renewing them again to repentance. No humble penitent, therefore, has any ground to fear. Whatever his backslidings may have been, if he now truly repents of his sin, and implores pardon through the blood of the cross, he may feel assured that the way of salvation is open to him. The renewal to repentance has, in his case, been accomplished; and he may therefore know that he is not in the number of those, to whom this renewal is impossible.

The confessions of men eminent for piety, prove that they are

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[1] Heb. vi. [2] Heb. vi. 9.

not free from sin; and the cases of David, who committed adultery, and Peter, who denied his master, prove that true saints have sometimes fallen into gross sins. But David was renewed to repentance, and the record of his penitential acknowledgments has been transmitted to us in the 51st Psalm. A look of Jesus melted Peter's heart, and he went out, and wept bitterly. But the apostates, who are described in the passage which we have been considering, are given over to hardness of heart: "It is impossible to renew them again to repentance." The difficulty is, not that the blood of Christ is insufficient to atone for sins so atrocious, but that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. God never bestows the grace of repentance on such characters. But when one who has been born of God, falls into sin, this impossibility of renewing to repentance does not exist; but his seed remaineth in him; and divine grace brings him back from his wanderings, and restores him to the paths of righteousness. The fire of divine love in the heart, though its flame may be smothered for a time, is more easily rekindled than when first produced; and it is never true of him, as it is of an unregenerate man who falls away, that the last state is worse than the first.

Several other passages of Scripture, which have been understood to imply the apostasy of true believers, require consideration.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away."[1] This figurative representation, which the Saviour has employed, teaches that there is a sense, in which persons are "in" him, who do not bring forth the fruits of holiness. Such persons do not abide in him.[2] Their connection is not vital, but professional. They are among his disciples, but not of them; for if they had been of them, they would no doubt have continued with them. The process of separating them, described by the words, "he taketh away," corresponds well with the removing of a branch which has been grafted into a stalk, but has failed to become vitally connected with it. The perseverance of true saints is taught in the remaining part of the verse: "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

"If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a

[1] John xv. 2. [2] John xv. 6.

certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."[1] This passage has sometimes severely tried the faith of weak believers. When conscious of having committed sins to which their will has consented, these words present themselves in dreadful array, and seem to deter them from all further approach to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, from which they once obtained peace. In such times of trial, the language of faith is, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."[2] While this awful text fills with terror, the existence of an humble abiding trust in God is thus demonstrated, and, in view of it, other texts authorize encouragement and hope. With these encouraging and consolatory texts, the passage now under consideration, if properly understood, cannot be inconsistent. It describes the sin of those Hebrews who, after embracing the gospel of Christ, forsook the assembly of Christians,[3] and turned back to Judaism. To them no efficacious sacrifice for sin remained, in the abolished ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation; and if that of Christ were renounced, no other could be found. But these words were never designed to deter any humble penitent from free approach to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, whatever sins he may have committed. The assurance that Jesus has given, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,"[4] is sufficient to banish all fear from those who put their trust in him. The same invitation which first made them welcome, and the same assurance which first gave them peace, remain to encourage their continued confidence in his power and grace.

"Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite to the spirit of grace?"[5] The difficulty in this passage is found in the phrase "wherewith he was sanctified." Do these words teach that persons who have been sanctified may apostatise? Let it be observed that the word sanctify, among the Hebrews, was used to denote external consecration to God.[6] This consecration, under the former dispensation, to which the Hebrews had been accustomed, was by the blood

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[1] Heb. x. 26, 27. [2] Job xiii. 15. [3] Heb. x. 25.
[4] John. vi. 37. [5] Heb. x. 29. [6] Ex. xiii. 2; xix. 10, 22, 23, &c.

of animals. In professing Christianity, they had turned from the blood of animals to the blood of Christ; and their consecration to the service of Christ was by professed faith in his blood. In returning to Judaism, they rejected this precious blood, and accounted it an unholy thing, as if it had been the blood of a vile impostor. But it is better to interpret the phrase by referring the pronoun "he" to the last antecedent, "the Son of God." The Son of God was sanctified and sent into the world;[1] and as the priests of the law were consecrated with blood, Jesus, as our great High Priest, may be said to have been consecrated with the blood of the new covenant.

"The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."[2] In this verse our translators have supplied the words, "any man," which have no corresponding word in the Greek. The regular translation would be, "If he draw back," &c. Thus rendered, the pronoun "he" naturally refers to the just man, mentioned in the preceding clause; and the words seem to imply that a just man may draw back, so that God will have no pleasure in him. An argument for supplying the words "any man," may be drawn from the fact that these words are quoted from the Septuagint version of Habakkuk ii. 6, in which the last clause occurs first; and the man who draws back is manifestly distinguished from the just man. The same distinction is made by Paul in the words which immediately follow: "We are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul." The introduction of the words "any man," may therefore give a correct exposition of Paul's words: still, they are an exposition, and not a translation. Paul has inverted the order of the two clauses written by the prophet: and, in so doing, he was doubtless guided by the Holy Spirit, for some wise purpose; and it becomes us to learn from his words, as they have been given by the Spirit for our instruction and admonition. The prophet's warning was, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." This warning Paul places in such order, as to make it apply to the just man. What is true of any man, must be true of the just man; and Paul will not deny to the just man the benefit of this admonition. Such admonition,

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[1] John x. 36. [2] Heb. x. 38.

in the apostle's view, was not inconsistent with the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance.

"When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die."[1] These words are to be understood in the same manner as the words of Paul which have just been considered. The terms "just" and "righteous" are of like import, and are descriptive of those who obey God's commands, and enjoy his favor. Such persons need the admonitions contained in these passages; and they are given in language precisely adapted to the case. To all, except the Searcher of hearts, there is an uncertainty respecting men's character in his sight; and, on the ground of this uncertainty, opportunity is given for the needed admonition. Paul spoke with confidence, that the Hebrews whom he addressed were "of those who believe to the saving of the soul:" yet, without relying on his own estimate of their character, or deriving from it an assurance of their perseverance, he warned them earnestly against apostasy.

"If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."[2] These words describe men who have been reformed in their conduct by the influence of the gospel, but without a thorough change of heart. This appears from the proverb applied to them: "The dog has returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."[3] As the temporary change of the dog and the sow had not altered their natural propensities, so it was with these men. Their change, though a reform, had not made them new creatures.

"Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace."[4] These words describe a change in their doctrinal views as to the method of salvation. They had turned from salvation by grace to salvation by the law. But how far the state of their hearts was influenced by their doctrinal creed, either before or after the change here described, the passage does not inform us.

"Concerning faith having made shipwreck."[5] "Overthrow the

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[1] Ezek. xviii. 26. [2] 2 Pet. ii. 20. [3] 2 Pet. ii. 22.
[4] Gal. v. 4. [5] 1 Tim. i. 19.

faith of some."[1] Wrong views had been inculcated by these men respecting the resurrection of the dead. It may be that neither they, nor those who were misled by them, had ever received the love of the truth. On this point the passage says nothing.

"Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?"[2] When the stronger Christian will not, for the sake of a weak brother, deny himself a carnal indulgence, he exhibits a criminal disregard of his weak brother's spiritual interest. The tendency of his conduct is the ruin of his weak brother; and the criminality is to be judged by its tendency; and is the same, whether the tendency goes into effect, or is prevented by the interposition of divine grace. The question propounded does not affirm what the result will be; but impressively exhibits the guilt of the offender by contrasting his conduct with that of Christ. Christ died for the weak brother; and would you cause him to perish, rather than deny yourself a trifling gratification?

"I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."[3] These words contain a manifest reference to the Grecian games, in which the herald, who announced them, took no part in the contest, or the previous preparation for it; and therefore did not receive the crown. Paul was not only a herald, making the gospel proclamation, but he entered the lists as a combatant, and made diligent preparation for the conflict, by keeping under his body. He did this, knowing that his preaching, or acting the herald, to others, would not secure a crown to himself. He prepared diligently for the combat, that he might receive the crown, and not be a castaway, or one rejected by the Judge.

The explanation which has been given of this passage, removes all appearance of inconsistency between it and the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance; yet it admits that Paul was stimulated to activity and perseverance in the Christian conflict, by the belief that his obtaining of the crown depended on his perseverance and success in the struggle. They who understand the doctrine of perseverance to imply that God's people will obtain the crown without the struggle, totally mistake the matter. The doctrine is, that God's people will persevere in the struggle; and to suppose

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[1] 2 Tim. ii. 18. [2] 1 Cor. viii. 11. [3] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

that they will obtain the crown without doing so, is to contradict the doctrine. It is a wretched and fatal perversion of the doctrine, if men conclude that, having been once converted, they will be saved, whatever may be their course of life. God's word plainly declares, that "he who soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption:" and every man who does not keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, and who does not endure to the end, in this spiritual conflict, will assuredly fail to receive the crown. Without this, no conversion which he may have undergone, and not even a call to apostleship, will secure the approbation of the final Judge.

We have said that the new creature produced in regeneration, is immortal; but this immortality is dependent on the will of God, and is secured by means which God has provided. Adam, in his primeval innocence, was immortal; but his life was sustained, under God, by the fruits of the garden which had been assigned to his use. So God has appointed necessary means for preserving the divine life in the soul, and the use of these means is as indispensable to the accomplishment of the purpose, in this, as in all other cases in which he has chosen to work by means. The doctrine of final perseverance, when properly understood, does not teach that God's people are in no sense in danger of final apostasy. Paul tells us that he had often been in perils of waters.[1] One of these times of danger was the shipwreck which he experienced in his voyage to Rome. He, and all his companions in the vessel, were in great danger; and they could not have been saved, if the necessary means for their preservation had not been used. Yet God had both purposed and promised their deliverance. The righteous, notwithstanding the purpose and promise of God, are scarcely saved.[2] They succeed at last, as by a narrow escape. Through danger, imminent danger, they are at last delivered: and, in order to that deliverance, the use of the appointed means is as necessary as the appointment itself;—as necessary as the purpose of God.

The warnings which the Scriptures give to the people of God, constitute an important part of the means which God has appointed for their perseverance in holiness to eternal life. As the rock in

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[1] 2 Cor. xi. 26. [2] 1 Pet. iv. 18.

the mariner's chart guards him from being dashed to pieces, so these warnings preserve the spiritual mariner from destruction. The awful warnings given by Paul to the Hebrews, were designed to guard them against final apostasy. They therefore imply that there was danger of such apostasy. The heirs of promise might have strong consolation, in the hope founded on the oath and promise of God, that they would be brought safely through the danger. In the wisdom of God, the warnings are so given, as to secure their proper effect, without destroying that confidence in God, which is the Christian's hope and joy. To make this clear, and to derive the proper benefit from these warnings, let us briefly review them.

The warning given in Heb. vi. 4–7, was designed for real Christians. Every clause in the description of the persons, whose apostasy is declared to be fatal, would in other connections be understood to denote true Christians. The Hebrew Christians are elsewhere described as persons "illuminated."[1] The first particular in the description here, is, "who were once enlightened." Other particulars are added, agreeing with well known peculiarities, which distinguished the followers of Christ. These words, therefore, contain a general description of Christians; and the warning which they contain was applicable to Christians, and designed for their benefit. With these features of the Christian character, which are so vividly portrayed, and which were so well known in the days of primitive Christianity, there was generally connected a love to the truth, which was necessary to the full and proper effect of divine instruction. When this operated, the warning here proposed had its proper effect. These persons were like the fruitful ground, which received blessing from God;[2] and this love the apostle believed to exist in those to whom his epistle was directed.[3] They who possessed this love were moved by his warning, to make advance in spiritual attainments, according to his exhortation in the beginning of the chapter. But this result did not invariably follow the instructions and warning, which were given to those who possessed the general features of the Christian character. Apostasy sometimes occurred; and apostasy which was final and hopeless. This fact gave just occasion for the warning.

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[1] Heb. x. 32. [2] Heb. vi. 7. [3] Heb. vi. 9, 10.

Similar remarks may be made on the passages in the 10th chapter of Hebrews. That they were designed as warnings to true Christians, may be seen in the fact that Paul includes himself in the number. "If *we* sin wilfully,"[1] &c., and in the further fact that the just "are warned against drawing back."[2] The alarming consequences of apostasy are exhibited in the absence of all further sacrifice for sin; in the sore punishment which is deserved;—and in the perdition to which the apostate draws back. All these consequences were set before the Christians, who are addressed, and the apostle again expresses his confidence, that they, with himself, will, in the belief and love of the truth, receive the warning and be saved.

The warnings against apostasy, and the exhortations to perseverance, were not addressed to false professors, as such. The apostle was not solicitous that these should persevere in their false profession. They to whom his epistle was directed, were all exhorted to hold fast their profession, on the supposition that it had been honestly made. All had exhibited the appearances of true religion, and were treated accordingly. The plant which springs from seed sown in stony places, does not differ from that which is sown in good ground, except in not having much depth of earth; and this defect becomes manifest, when it withers under the beams of the sun. So those who afterwards apostatise, agree in the profession which they make, and all the appearances of religion which they exhibit, with those who endure to the end. The difference is, that the word has not a deep place in their hearts; and this is discovered only by their apostasy. "They went out from us, that they might be made manifest, that they are not all of us."[3] Hence, until their apostasy occurs, the same means of spiritual cultivation are employed for their benefit, as for others; the same hopes are entertained for them; and the same language is used in describing them. The tendency of this spiritual cultivation is to render them fruitful, like the rest; but it fails to produce this effect, because they have no sincere and abiding love of the truth.

The doctrine of final perseverance, properly understood, gives no encouragement to sluggishness or negligence in duty; much less does it lead to licentiousness. He who takes occasion from it to

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[1] Heb. x. 26. [2] Heb. x. 38. [3] 1 John ii. 19.

sin against God, or to be indolent in his service, not only misunderstands, and misapplies the doctrine, but has reason to fear that his heart is not right before God. Perseverance in holiness is the only infallible proof that the heart is right; and he who ceases to persevere, on the presumption that his heart is right, believes without the proper evidence, and is wofully hazarding his eternal interests on his presumption. The doctrine is, that grace in the heart will produce perseverance to the end; and where the effect is not produced, the cause does not exist. Every man, therefore, whatever his past professions and attainments may have been, has reason to take alarm, if he finds his heart inclined to depart from Christ: and the greater his past attainments may have been, the greater is the occasion for alarm; because his case, if he falls away, will so much the more resemble that in which renewal to repentance is impossible.

To reject the doctrine of final perseverance, tends to fix the hope of salvation on human effort, and not on the purpose and grace of God. If, in God's method of salvation, no provision has been made, which secures the safe keeping of the regenerate, and their perseverance in holiness, their salvation is left dependent on their own efforts, and their trust must be in that on which success depends. All that God has done for them, will fail to bring them through, if this effort, originating in themselves, be not superadded; and the eye of hope is necessarily directed to this human effort, as that on which the momentous issue depends. Thus the denial of the doctrine draws off the heart from simple trust in God, and therefore tends to produce apostasy. The just shall live by faith.[1] Simple trust in God, is necessary to preserve the spiritual life; and to trust in man, and make flesh our arm,[2] is to fall under the curse, and draw back to perdition. In our first coming to Christ, we renounce all confidence in self, and put our entire trust in the mercy and power of God: and in the same faith with which we began, we must persevere to the end of our course. Worldly wisdom may encourage self-reliance, and regard it as necessary to success: but the wisdom that is from above teaches us to renounce and avoid it as ruinous to the soul.

Convinced of his weakness and helplessness, the believer learns more and more in this life of faith to trust God, and to have no

[1] Heb. x. 38. [2] Jer. xvii. 5.

confidence in himself. He learns, by daily experience, the treachery of his own heart, and is increasingly weaned from the folly of trusting in it. It becomes his more earnest prayer, as he makes greater progress in the knowledge of himself and the way of salvation. "Hold thou me up."[1] He looks forward to the temptations and trials through which he has to pass; and, unwilling to trust himself in the least degree, asks God, earnestly and importunately to keep him to the end. This prayer he may hope that God will answer, if the doctrine of final perseverance be true. If the grace to persevere is a gift of God, it is a proper subject of prayer; and that doctrine best accords with God's method of salvation, which teaches us to come boldly to the throne of grace, for the mercy and grace to help in every time of need. We cannot now ask with confidence, for grace to help us through all future times of need, and to incline and strengthen us to persevere to the end, if the bestowment of such persevering grace is not within God's plan of salvation.

The doctrine of final perseverance is full of consolation to the believer, when ready to faint in his spiritual warfare. So far as he finds, in a careful examination of his heart, evidence that the love of God has been shed abroad there by the Holy Spirit, he is enabled to regard this grace as an earnest of the future inheritance, and to rejoice in hope of obtaining that inheritance in full possession, at the time appointed of his heavenly Father. If doubts arise, they spring not from a view of incompleteness in God's method of salvation, but they refer exclusively to the question whether his heart has been brought to put simple and exclusive trust in that divine method, and the provision of mercy which it includes. As the best termination of these doubts, he views the way open for him to come now, if never before, and cast himself on this mercy, so richly provided, and so gloriously adapted to his necessities.

Section VII.—PERFECTION.

The process of sanctification, which is continued during the present life, is completed when the subjects of it are perfectly fitted for the service and enjoyments of heaven. In this work of

[1] Ps. cxix. 117.

the Spirit, the resurrection of the body is included, and the fashioning of it like the glorious body of Christ. Having been predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear son,[1] the purposed work of grace is not completed until we appear in glory, with our bodies like the glorious body of the Redeemer. For this perfect conformity, the saints on earth long, and to it they look as the consummation of their wishes and hopes: "Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness."[2] This was the object of Paul's earnest desire, the prize for which he put forth every effort. He refers to it in these words: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead: not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[3]

The work of grace will not be completed until the second coming of Christ: "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."[4] Then the last change will be made, which will fit us for the eternal service and enjoyment of God, in his high and holy place. Then we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "Now we know in part; but then we shall know even as also we are known." "Then that which is perfect will have come;" and until then every saint must say with Paul: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect."

Besides this final perfection, to which the saints are taught to aspire, there are stages in their progress to which the name perfection is, in a subordinate sense, applied in the Holy Scriptures. The disembodied saints, now in the presence of God, though they have not attained to the resurrection of the body, are nevertheless called "just men made perfect."[5] They are free from the body of death, free from sin, free from all the tribulations and sorrows of this world, and are present with the Lord, and in the enjoyment of his love.

Even in the present life there are stages in the Christian's progress to which the term perfection is applied. When they have

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[1] Rom. viii. 29. [2] Ps. xvii. 15. [3] Phil. iii. 11, 12, 13.
[4] Phil. i. 6. [5] Heb. xii. 23.

attained to an enlarged knowledge of divine truth, they are said to be perfect, or of full age, to distinguish them from those who have learned only the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.[1] Men who make a full and consistent exhibition of the religious character, by a godly life, are called perfect. So Job was "perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil."[2] To Christians generally the term "perfect" appears to be applied, in the exhortation of Paul: "Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."[3] He here includes himself among the perfect; and yet, in the same chapter,[4] he affirms that he was not already perfect. It is clear, therefore, that the words are used in different senses in the two places.

No perfection to which the people of God attain in the present life, includes perfect freedom from sin. Job, though a perfect man, said, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say, I am perfect, it also shall prove me perverse."[5] Paul, though numbering himself among the perfect, said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me."[6] "I am carnal, sold under sin."[7] John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;"[8] and Solomon, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not."[9] With these declarations of God's word, the experience of Christians in all ages has agreed; and they have found need for the daily prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses."

In the precept, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect,"[10] we may take the term in its highest sense. As we are commanded to love God with all the heart—to be holy because he is holy; it is our duty to be perfectly free from sin; and to come up to this standard, should be our constant aim and effort. We cannot attain to a perfect knowledge of God in the present life; but we may follow on to know him.[11] So we cannot attain to a perfect likeness in holiness, yet we may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory."[12] Progress in the divine life is full of reward, and full of encouragement, even while we are fighting the good fight of faith, and before we obtain the victor's crown. The

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[1] Heb. vi. 1; v. 14. [2] Job i. 1. [3] Phil. iii. 15.
[4] Phil. iii. 12. [5] Job ix. 20. [6] Rom. vii. 21.
[7] Rom. vii. 14. [8] 1 John i. 8. [9] Eccl. vii. 20
[10] Matt. v. 48. [11] Hosea vi. 3. [12] 2 Cor. iii. 19.

promise of grace to help in every struggle, of continued success in every conflict, and of final victory, is sufficient encouragement to put forth every effort. We should ever press toward the mark, ever keep the high standard of perfection in view, and aim to reach it. "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."[1]

The indication is fearful when a man excuses sin in himself, on the ground that perfection is not attainable in the present life. A true Christian may have a besetting sin; but any one who has an indulged, allowed, or excused sin, has reason to fear that the love of sin has never been crucified in his heart. And he who satisfies himself with any standard below absolute perfection in holiness, is so far allowing sin in himself, and giving the indication which ought to alarm him.

In the spiritual warfare, of which every believer is conscious, the love of God in the heart is in conflict with other affections which are not duly subordinated to it. Growth in grace implies an ascendancy of the holy affection over those with which it contends. That gains strength, and those grow weaker, as the house of David waxed stronger, and the house of Saul weaker,[2] in their struggle for the dominion over Israel. It is therefore our duty, that we may grow in grace, to cherish the holy affections, which rise heavenward, and to mortify the carnal affections, which are earthward in their tendency. No man on earth can justly claim that the affections of his heart are perfectly regulated according to the high standard of God's law. The internal conflict between the law in the members and the law in the mind, does not cease till God calls away the spirit from its union with the mortal body. The phrase "law in our members,"[3] does not imply that our sin belongs properly to our material bodies; but it nevertheless apparently suggests that the conflict between the law in the members and the law in the mind, may be expected to continue as long as the members and the mind have their present relation to each other. Just men are made perfect[4] when they become disembodied spirits. When absent from the body, they are present with the Lord;[5] and

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[1] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [2] 2 Sam. iii. 1. [3] Rom. vii. 23.
[4] Heb. xii. 23. [5] 2 Cor. v. 8.

they are then holy; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.[1]

We should not attribute to death the efficiency of our final deliverance from sin. It is only an instrument which the Holy Spirit uses in his work, just as he has used the many afflictions which have preceded death, and of which death is the termination. As this is the last suffering which the righteous will endure, the last enemy which remains to be destroyed, it is appropriately used as the last instrumentality which the Holy Spirit will employ in his work. And it is a most suitable instrumentality. Death introduces us into the full knowledge of God, which is necessary to the perfect love of him. It opens to our view the unseen things of the eternal world, that they may have their full and proper influence on our minds. It separates us for ever from the things of earth, to which our affections have been so strongly inclined to cleave. The death of a beloved friend has often been blessed as a means of our sanctification: but when we die, all our surviving friends die to us at once. The loss of property has weaned us from the world: but at death we lose all our earthly possessions at a single stroke. God may have burned down our dwellings and consumed in the flames the coffers which contained our gold, when he graciously designed to direct our thoughts to the house not made with hands, and to the treasure which cannot be consumed. What, then, when the earth itself, which he has given for the habitation of men, and all therein which he has given them to enjoy, shall be burned up in the last conflagration; or shall be shown to us as prepared to be cast into that funeral fire? This is well adapted to eradicate from the heart the love of the things that perish. This fit instrumentality the Spirit employs in completing his work of sanctification. Yet, as in all our afflictions, the efficiency is not in the means employed, but in the divine power which employs them to fulfil his gracious purpose.

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[1] Heb. xii. 14.

CHAPTER IV.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GRACE.

GOD BESTOWS THE BLESSINGS OF HIS GRACE, NOT ACCORDING TO THE WORKS OF THE RECIPIENT, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN SOVEREIGN PLEASURE.[1]

God is sovereign in doing what he pleases, uncontrolled by any other being. "He doth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him: 'What doest thou?'"[2] No superior being exists, who can dictate to Jehovah what he should do, or hinder him from the execution of his pleasure, or call him to account for anything that he has done.

Sovereignty is to be distinguished from arbitrariness. In the latter, the will of the agent directs the action, without reference to a wise or good purpose to be accomplished. When God acts, it is according to his good pleasure. His pleasure is good, because it is always directed to a good end. He is sovereign in his acts, because his acts are determined by his own perfections. He has a rule for what he does; but this rule is not prescribed to him by any other being, nor does it exist independently of himself. It is found in his own nature. In his acts, his nature is unfolded and displayed.

In some respects the divine nature is so far made known to us, that we are able to understand the rule to which his acts conform. We so far understand his justice, that the distribution of rewards and punishments according to the works of men, is a process for which we can account, and the result of which we can in part foretell. But there are mysteries in the divine nature which are too deep for us to fathom: and hence we are unable to assign a rule for the divine proceedings. These are the cases which we specially refer to the sovereignty of God. He is not less sovereign in his justice, than in the dispensations for which he has given us

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[1] 2 Tim. i. 9; Rom. ix. 16; Phil. ii. 13, Matt. xi. 25; Luke x. 21; Eph. ii. 4–9.

[2] Dan. iv. 35.

no reason. But we bow before his sovereignty, in the best exercise of simple confidence in him, when we are least able to account for his doings; and it has been his pleasure, to leave much of his proceedings involved in mystery, that we may have occasion for the exercise of this confidence, which is pleasing to him, and profitable to ourselves.

We are prone to demand the reason or rule of God's acts, and to prescribe rules according to which God should act; but the Scriptures teach us to restrain this propensity. "Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it: 'Why hast thou made me thus?'"[1] "He giveth not account of any of his matters."[2] But though the Scriptures do not explain those dispensations of God which we are compelled to refer to his inscrutable sovereignty, they teach us that God is not governed by such rules as human wisdom would prescribe. His ways are above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts, as high as the heavens are above the earth.[3]

Men often complain that God's ways are not equal, and charge him with partiality in his dealings with his creatures. When this charge is brought against him, in such a manner as to imply injustice in anything which he does, he repels the charge: "Are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?"[4] But in bestowing the blessings of his grace, God claims the right to do what he will with his own.[5] He is not bound to give to every one an equal measure of undeserved favor; or to measure his freely bestowed blessings, according to the works of those on whom they are bestowed. This is clearly taught in the inspired word: "He hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."[6] "Not of works, but of him that calleth."[7] "Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."[8]

In the condition of the creatures that God has made, we observe a diversity to which we can assign no limits. In the vegetable kingdom, we find productions varying from the cedar of Lebanon to the minute blade of grass, some beautiful and fragrant, or adapted

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[1] Rom. ix. 20.
[2] Job xxxiii. 13.
[3] Isaiah lv. 9.
[4] Ez. xviii. 29.
[5] Matt. xx. 15.
[6] 2 Tim. i. 9.
[7] Rom. ix. 11.
[8] Rom. ix. 16.

to great utility, and others without any quality in which we can perceive a reason for their having been made. Among animals, a boundless variety appears, in their size, modes of life, and capacity for enjoyment. In the condition of human beings, the system of diversity continues. As the human species differs from every other species, so the condition of each individual man differs from that of every other individual belonging to the species. One man passes his days in affluence and ease, and another drags out his miserable existence in poverty and toil. One enjoys almost uninterrupted health, while another, from the beginning to the end of his life, is oppressed with disease and pain. One possesses intellect susceptible of the highest cultivation, and is favored with all the necessary means of cultivation; while another gropes his way in mental darkness, either from the natural imbecility of his mind, or from the disadvantageous circumstances in which his lot of life is cast. Why is all this diversity? We must answer in the words of Christ: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."[1] To some extent the sufferings and enjoyments of men in the present life are attributable to their personal conduct; and so far the reason for the divine dispensation towards them is apparent; but, to a far greater extent, no cause can be assigned by human reason; and we are compelled to ascribe the mysterious arrangement to the sovereignty of God. As he is sovereign in creation and providence, so he is sovereign in the dispensations of his grace. "He divides to every man severally as he will."[2] He withholds from the wise and prudent, and reveals unto babes, as it seems good in his sight.[3] When the question arises: "Who made thee to differ from another?" the proper answer is: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;"[4] and "By the grace of God, I am what I am."[5] In the dispensations of grace, full regard is had to justice, and nothing unjust is done to any one; but grace rises high above justice, and gives ample room for the display of the divine sovereignty, in the distribution of blessings to which no individual has the slightest claim.

Among the rules which human officiousness prescribes to God

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[1] Matt. xi. 26. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 11. [3] Matt. xi. 25.
[4] Rom. ix. 16. [5] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

for the regulation of his conduct, we are prone to insist that the blessings of his grace should be distributed according to men's works. We do not presume to say, that they should be given *for* men's works, for this would render them rewards of debt, and not of grace. Scripture and reason unite in checking the presumption which would claim all that God bestows, as due on the ground of merit: but, while we relinquish the claim on the ground of positive merit, we are yet prone to conceive that there is a fitness in conferring the blessings of grace on those who have the negative merit of being less wicked than others. In this method of dispensation, which human wisdom would recommend, the blessings are conferred, not *for* men's works, but *according to* their works: but the wisdom of God rejects the counsel of human wisdom in this particular. A Saul of Tarsus, though chief of sinners, is made a happy recipient of divine grace, while an amiable young ruler, who had kept the law from his youth up, is left to perish in his self-righteousness. Publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven; while multitudes, less wicked than they, are left to the course to which natural depravity inclines them. These cases exemplify the explicit declarations of Scripture, which teach, that "we are saved and called, not according to our works."

It is true, that in the last day, men will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. But it must be remembered that salvation begins in the present life. To the present life the calling of men from darkness to light is limited; and the salvation and calling of the present life, are not according to men's works. As men are called "to be holy," the holiness which they exhibit as a consequence of the salvation and calling which they receive from the grace of God, distinguishes them from other men, and becomes a proper rule for the decisions of the last day. We see, therefore, that the last judgment will be according to the deeds done in the body; while it nevertheless remains, that we are saved and called, not according to our works, but according to the purpose and grace of God.

Section 1.—ELECTION.

All who will finally be saved, were chosen to salvation by God the Father, before the foundation of the world, and given to Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace.[1]

The doctrine of election encounters strong opposition in the hearts of men, and it is therefore necessary to examine thoroughly its claim to our belief. As it relates to an act of the divine mind, no proof of its truth can be equal to the testimony of the Scriptures. Let us receive their teachings on the subject without hesitation or distrust; and let us require every preconceived opinion of ours, and all our carnal reasonings, to bow before the authority of God's holy word.

The Scriptures clearly teach, that God has an elect or chosen people. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect."[2] Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.[3] "Shall not God avenge his own elect."[4] "Ye are a chosen generation."[5] "God hath chosen you to salvation."[6] "According as he hath chosen us in Christ."[7] Whatever may have been our prejudices against the doctrine of election as held and taught by some ministers of religion, it is undeniable, that, in some sense, the doctrine is found in the Bible; and we cannot reject it, without rejecting that inspired book. We are bound by the authority of God, to receive the doctrine; and nothing remains, but that we should make an honest effort to understand it, just as it is taught in the sacred volume.

The Scriptures teach expressly, that God's people are chosen to salvation. "Beloved, we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, because he hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."[8] Some have been chosen by God[9] to peculiar offices; as Paul was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles, and David was chosen to be the King of Israel. The whole nation of Israel was chosen out of all nations to be a peculiar people to the Lord: but it is very clear that the eternal

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[1] Eph. i. 4, 5; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2; ii. 9; John vi. 37; Rom. viii. 33; John x. 27–29.

[2] Rom. viii. 33. [3] 1 Pet. i. 2. [4] Luke xviii. 7.

[5] 1 Pet. ii. 9. [6] 2 Thess. ii. 13. [7] Eph. i. 4.

[8] 2 Thess. ii. 13. [9] Acts ix. 15.

salvation of every Israelite was not secured by this national election; for to some of them Christ said, "Ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go ye cannot come."[1] The election to salvation is shown by the words of Paul in Rom. ix. 6, to be different from this national election: "They are not all Israel that are of Israel." "There is a remnant according to the election of grace."[2] The national election comprehended all Israel, according to the flesh: but the election of grace included those only who will finally be saved. It is not a choice merely to the means of salvation, for these were granted to all the nation of Israel: but it was a choice to salvation itself, and therefore respected the "remnant," and not the whole nation.

The Scriptures plainly teach that the election of grace is from eternity. "God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation."[3] "According as he hath chosen us in him from the foundation of the world."[4] "According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."[5] Election is a part of God's eternal purpose. Had it been his purpose to save all the human race, there would have been no elect from among men; no peculiar people, no redeemed out of every nation. But his purpose to save did not include all the race; and therefore, on some principle yet to be inquired into, some of the race have been selected, who will receive the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. The eternity of God's election ought not to excite in our hearts any objection against it. If, in the final judgment, God will distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, whatever he will then do in righteousness, it was right for him to purpose to do from all eternity. In his final sentence, all his preceding dispensations toward the children of men, and all their actions under these dispensations, will be carefully reviewed, and the final doom of every one will be pronounced in righteousness. All that will then be present to the divine mind, was before it from all eternity; and what God will then do, he purposed to do from the beginning; and the reasons for which he will do it, are the reasons for which he purposed to do it. There can be no wrong in the purpose, if it does not exist in the execution. If

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[1] John viii. 22, 24. [2] Rom. xi. 5. [3] 2 Thess. ii. 13.
[4] Eph. i. 4. [5] 2 Tim. i. 9.

God can fully justify at the last day, before the assembled universe, all his dispensations toward the children of men; all these dispensations must be right, and the purpose of them from eternity must have been right: and if a division of the human race can then be righteously made, that division was righteously made in the purpose of God; and consequently God's election was made in righteousness.

The Scriptures teach that election is of grace, and not of works. "Not of works, lest any man should boast;"[1] and if it be of works, then grace is no more grace.[2] The subject is illustrated by the case of Jacob and Esau, of whom Jacob was chosen, before the children had done either good or evil; and in applying this illustration, Paul says: "That the purpose of God according to election might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth."[3] In the last day, God will discriminate between the righteous and the wicked, according to their works: and it was the eternal purpose of God, that this discrimination should then be made on that ground; but the purpose of God includes an earlier discrimination made in effectual calling; whence we read of those who are "the called according to his purpose."[4] This discrimination, made at the time of calling, is not according to men's works, for it is expressly said, "who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began;"[5] calling is a blessing of grace, not conferred for previous works, nor according to previous works. Why is this benefit bestowed? The answer is, "not of works, but of him that calleth."[6] "Not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."[7] It is God that worketh in us to will and to do, of his good pleasure."[8] The first actual separation of God's people from the rest of mankind, is made when they are called out of darkness into his marvellous light; and this calling is not according to men's works, but according to the good pleasure of God. A discrimination is then made, for reasons wholly unknown to mortals; not according to the works of men, but on a ground which infinite wisdom approves. The reason of the procedure is laid deep in the counsels of the divine

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[1] Eph. ii. 9. [2] Rom. xi. 6. [3] Rom. ix. 11.
[4] Rom. viii. 28. [5] 2 Tim. i. 9. [6] Rom. ix. 11.
[7] Rom. ix. 16. [8] Phil. ii. 13.

mind; and we are compelled to say respecting it, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"[1] This actual separation of God's people from the rest of mankind, made in their effectual calling, is like everything which he does, the fulfilment of his eternal purpose. "He worketh all things after the counsel of his will;"[2] and "known unto him are all his works from the beginning."[3] The purpose to effect this first actual discrimination, is God's election; and the ground of the discrimination when it actually takes place, is nothing different from that of the purpose to discriminate; that is, it is the ground of election. The discrimination, when actually made, is approved by the wisdom of God; and all the consequences of it will be approved in the last day, and throughout all coming eternity; and therefore the election, or purpose to discriminate, was approved by infinite wisdom, in the counsels of eternity past. When we object to the act, or the purpose, we presume to be wiser than God.

From the views which have been presented, it necessarily follows, that election is not on the ground of foreseen faith or obedience. On this point, the teachings of Scripture are clear. They are chosen not because of their holiness, but that they may be holy;[4] not because of their obedience, but unto obedience.[5] As the discrimination made in effectual calling is God's work, and antecedent to all holiness, faith, or acceptable obedience; the purpose to discriminate could not be on the ground of acts foreseen, which do not exist as a consideration for the execution of the purpose. The discriminating grace which God bestows, is not on the ground of faith and obedience previously existing, but for a reason known only to God himself. This unrevealed reason, and not foreseen faith and obedience, is the ground of election.

The Scriptures teach that election is according to the foreknowledge of God.[6] We are, however, not to understand the foreknowledge here mentioned, to be foreknowledge of faith or good works. Faith and good works do not exist, before the grace consequent on election begins to be bestowed; and therefore a foresight of them is impossible. Moreover, the objects of this divine foreknowledge are the persons of the elect, and not their

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[1] Rom. xi. 33. [2] Eph. i. 11. [3] Acts xv. 18.
[4] Eph. i. 4. [5] 1 Pet. i. 2. [6] 1 Pet. i. 2.

faith or good works. "Whom he foreknew, them he also did predestinate."[1] In this foreknowledge of persons, according to the Scripture use of terms, a peculiar regard to them is implied. It is said, "Hath God cast away his people, whom he foreknew."[2] If simple knowledge, without any peculiar regard, were all that is here implied, it would be equally true that God foreknew the heathen nations, as well as the nation of Israel.

This case of national election may serve also to illustrate the ground of election to salvation. God's choice of the Hebrew nation arose from a peculiar regard to them, not founded on their superiority to other nations,[3] but on his own sovereign pleasure. He loved them, because he would love them. So the election of grace is according to God's foreknowledge of his people; a foreknowledge implying a peculiar regard not founded on any superiority in the objects of it, but arising from the sovereign pleasure of God.

Election is ascribed to God the Father, redemption to God the Son, and sanctification to God the Holy Spirit: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."[4] The Father, as sustaining the authority of the Godhead, is represented as giving the elect to Christ in the covenant of grace: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me."[5]

The choice of them was with reference to Christ, and that they might be given to him, and rendered accepted in him. Hence they are said to be "chosen in Christ."[6] The election, or setting of them apart to salvation, is, in Jude, attributed to God the Father, by the use of the word sanctify, which signifies to set apart: "Sanctified by God the Father." The next clause of this verse, "preserved in Christ Jesus," may denote that a special divine care is exercised over the elect, because of their covenant relation to Christ, even before their being called by the Holy Spirit. "Preserved in Christ Jesus, and called."

Those who are not included in the election of grace, are called, in Scripture, "the rest,"[7] and "vessels of wrath."[8] Why they are not included, we are as unable to explain as why the others are

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[1] Rom. viii. 29. [2] Rom. xi. 1. 2. [3] Deut. vii. 7
[4] 1 Pet. i. 2. [5] John xvii. 6. [6] Eph. i. 4.
[7] Rom. xi. 7. [8] Rom. ix. 22.

included; and we are therefore compelled to refer the matter to the sovereignty of God, who, beyond all doubt, acts herein most wisely and righteously, though he has not explained to us the reasons of his procedure. His absolute sovereignty, in the discrimination which he makes, is expressed by Paul in these words: "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth."[1] The natural tendency of human depravity is such, that the heart grows harder under the general mercies which God bestows, unless he superadds to all the other benefits which he confers, the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, by which the heart is changed. This renewing grace he gives or withholds at his sovereign pleasure. This sovereignty, in so bestowing mercy as to soften the hard heart, is unquestionably taught by the words just quoted, however we may interpret the phrase "he hardeneth." It is not necessary to understand these words as implying a positive act of God, exerted for the purpose of producing hardness of heart, and directed to this end. When Paul speaks of the vessels of mercy, he says that God hath "afore prepared" them for glory; but when he speaks of the vessels of wrath, as fitted for destruction, he does not say that God has fitted them for this end.[2] As the potter, out of the same mass, makes one vessel to honor and another to dishonor;[3] so God, out of the same mass of mankind, prepares some for glory, as vessels of mercy; while others, whatever benefits they may receive from him, being left without renewing grace, abuse the mercies which he bestows, and, growing harder by the influence of their natural depravity, are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.

Divines have used the term "reprobate" as equivalent to "non-elect;" but this is not the Scripture use of the term. Paul says, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?[4] Here all are regarded as reprobates in whom Christ does not dwell by faith; and, of consequence, the elect themselves are reprobates so long as they remain in unbelief. Reprobation, as a positive act of God, is no other than the condemnation under which all unbelievers lie.

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[1] Rom. ix. 18.
[2] Rom. ix. 22, 23.
[3] Rom. ix. 21.
[4] 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

From a state of condemnation, God, according to his purpose in election, delivers some by his renewing grace, and this is no injury or disadvantage done to the rest.

The doctrine of election is generally opposed by unrenewed men: and even in the minds of those whose hearts have been renewed by grace, such objections to it often arise as to prevent the cordial reception of it. The most common of these objections it will be proper here to consider.

Obj. 1. The doctrine of election offers no inducement to human effort. Under the belief of it men conclude that, if elected, they will be saved, do what they will; and if not elected, they will be damned, do what they can. Hence they decide that all effort on their part is useless, and that it will be as well to live as they please, and dismiss all concern about their destiny, over which they can have no control.

That some men, who profess to believe the doctrine of election, make a bad use of it, cannot be denied; but it cannot be affirmed that all who receive the doctrine reason or act in the manner stated in the objection. On the contrary, multitudes, eminent for holiness of life and self-denying labors in the cause of Christ, not only cordially receive the doctrine, but ascribe all their holiness and self-denying labors to that grace which they have received from God's electing love. Many who reject and hate the doctrine, determine to live as they please, and to give themselves no concern for the things of God and religion: and the same cause will produce the same effect, in unregenerate men who admit the doctrine, and pervert it by their carnal reasonings to a use to which it has no legitimate tendency.

This objection to election applies equally to every part of the divine purpose, and proceeds on the supposition that God has predetermined the end without reference to the means by which it is to be accomplished. God has his purpose in providence, as well as in grace; and works all things in each department of his operations, after the counsel of his own will: but no wise man will say, "If I am to have a crop, I shall have it, whether I plough and sow, or not; and therefore I need not labor, or give myself concern to obtain bread to eat." The purpose of God leaves men at equal liberty, and gives them equal encouragement to labor for the meat that perisheth not, as for that which perisheth. God's

purpose does not sever the connection between the means and the end, but establishes it; and there is nothing, in a proper view of God's sovereignty, whether in providence or in grace, to induce the belief that the end may be obtained without the use of the appropriate means; or that the end need be despaired of if the appropriate means be used. The word of God assures us, that "he who believes in Christ shall be saved, and he who believes not shall be damned;" and there is nothing in God's purpose, or in a proper view of his purpose, to annul these declarations of his word. The purpose of God determines his own action; but his revealed word is the rule of ours; and if we so act as to have his promise on our side, we may be sure that his purpose also will be on our side: but his purpose cannot secure the salvation of any who remain in impenitence and unbelief, and under the condemnation of his revealed word.

It is true, however, that election discourages such human effort as is made in a wrong direction. It prostrates all human hope at the feet of a Sovereign God, and teaches the prayer, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." It discountenances all effort to save ourselves by our own works of righteousness; but brings the sinner to commit himself at once to the sovereign mercy of God. He who, knowing himself to be condemned and helpless, gives himself, from the heart, into the hands of God as a sovereign, and trusts entirely to his grace for salvation, will find no reason to prefer that this grace should be conferred according to some present determination of the divine mind, rather than according to the counsel of eternal wisdom. The objection to the latter, if thoroughly analyzed, will be found to contain in it some lurking idea that it is safer to trust in something else than in God's absolute mercy. As such lurking trust is dangerous to the soul, the doctrine of election has a salutary tendency to deliver us from it. It tends to produce precisely that trust in God, that complete surrender of ourselves to him, to which alone the promise of eternal life is made; and if we reject the doctrine, we ought to consider whether we do not, at the same time, reject our only hope of life everlasting.

Obj. 2. The doctrine of election is unfavorable to the interests of morality. If men believe that God has appointed them to salvation or damnation, at his own pleasure, without regard to their

works, the motive to good works which is drawn from the expectation of future reward or punishment, will cease to influence them.

At the last day men will be judged according to their works. God's choice of men to holiness and obedience, and the grace bestowed on them to render them holy and obedient, do not change the rule by which the final judgment will be pronounced: they, therefore, leave the expectation of future retribution to have its full effect on the minds of men. No one will be condemned at the mere pleasure of God; but every sentence of condemnation will be for sins committed. Hence the fear of future punishment ought to deter men from the commission of sin. None have a right to expect acceptance in the great day who do not, in the present life, serve God in sincerity and with persevering constancy. A belief that God, by his grace, inclines some men to serve him, and that he determined, from eternity, to bestow this grace upon them, cannot diminish, in any well-disposed mind, the proper influence arising from the expectation of future retribution, or produce indifference to the claims of morality. In electing men to salvation, God has devised no method of accomplishing his gracious purpose respecting them, but by rendering them holy and obedient; and therefore the doctrine of election teaches the indispensable necessity of holiness and obedience, in order to salvation. The doctrine is perverted and abused when men take occasion from it to indulge in sin.

Obj. 3. The doctrine of election represents God as partial, and is, therefore, inconsistent with the Scripture, which teaches that "The wisdom which is from above, is without partiality."[1]

The wisdom from above, which James declares to be without partiality, dwells in the minds of Christian men, and is exercised in their intercourse with mankind. It does not incline or require them to feel equal affection toward all, or to do good equally to all. Within the limits of justice, it requires that every man shall have his due; and here, all partiality is injustice. In the department of benevolence, the Christian man is not bound to bestow his favors with equality, on all his fellow creatures. The wisdom from above guides him, in the distribution of his favors, by other rules. So

[1] James iii. 17.

God, the source of this wisdom, is without partiality in the dispensation of his justice; but, in bestowing his grace, he acts as a sovereign, and claims and exercises the right to do what he will with his own. Partiality in a judge, when professing to administer justice, is a great wrong; but the same judge may bestow special favor on his children, or near friends, or on chosen objects of charity, without any just imputation of wrong; and to charge God with partiality, because he bestows his favors as he pleases, is to pour contempt on his sovereignty, and covertly to deny his right to do what he will with his own. He may well say to man who makes this charge: "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

Obj. 4. The doctrine of election represents God as a respecter of persons; but Peter affirmed that "God is not a respecter of persons."[1]

The same phrase has different significations, according to the connection in which it is used. We may affirm that God is, in one sense of the phrase, a respecter of persons, for his word states, that "he had respect unto Abel and his offering."[2] The first Christians were taught, not to have respect of persons, by giving superior places, in their religious assemblies, to those who were rich, and wore gay clothing.[3] The Hebrew judges were required not to have respect of persons, by favoring any one in his cause.[4] In this objectionable sense, God is not a respecter of persons. Before him, the rich and great of the earth are as nothing: yet he has respect to his saints, however humble and despised among men. When Peter affirmed that God is not a respecter of persons, he was addressing the first company of uncircumcised persons to whom the Gospel was preached; and his words manifestly imported the equal admission of Gentiles with Jews, to the privileges and blessings of the Gospel. "God is not a respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."[5] The words express nothing contrary to what Peter elsewhere says: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."[6]

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[1] Acts x. 34. [2] Gen. iv. 4. [3] James ii. 3.
[4] Lev. xix. 15. [5] Acts x. 34, 35. [6] 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Obj. 5. The doctrine of election represents God as insincere. He invites all men to participate in the blessings of the gospel; and yet, if this doctrine is true, the blessings of the gospel are not designed for all.

If God's word teaches the doctrine of election, and if it contains commands or invitations to all men to seek salvation through Christ, it is highly presumptuous in us to charge God with insincerity, because we cannot reconcile the two things with each other. We ought to remember that we are worms of the dust, and that it is criminal arrogance in us to judge and condemn the infinite God. But, in truth, there is no ground whatever for this charge of insincerity. God requires all men to believe in Christ; and this is their duty, however unwilling they may be to perform it. The fact that they are unwilling, and that God knows they will remain unwilling, unless he change their hearts, abates nothing from the sincerity of the requirement. God proves his sincerity, by holding them to the obligation, and condemning their unbelief. He promises salvation to all who believe in Christ; and he proves his sincerity, by fulfilling his promise in every instance. The *bestowment* of special grace, changing the hearts of men, and bringing them to believe in Christ, is, in no respect, inconsistent with any requirement or promise that God has made. While men regard the call of the gospel as an invitation which they may receive or reject at pleasure, it accords with their state of mind to institute the inquiry, whether God is sincere in offering this invitation: but when they regard it as a solemn requirement of duty, for which God will certainly hold them accountable, they will find no occasion for calling his sincerity in question.

Obj. 6. The doctrine of election confines the benevolence of God to a part of the human race; but the Scriptures teach, that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."[1]

God is kind to the unthankful and evil, and bestows blessings on the just and the unjust; but his benevolence, though infinite, does not produce in every one of his creatures the highest degree of happiness. The world which we inhabit abounds with misery, and the Scriptures have warned us, that there is a world of

[1] Ps. cxlv. 9.

unmitigated torment, into which wicked men will be driven, to be punished for their sins, with the devil and his angels. The justice of God limits the exercise of his benevolence; and, if we deny the doctrine of election, it still remains true, that the benevolence of God will effect the salvation of a part only of the human race. Now, unless it can be shown that the election of grace lessens the number of the saved, no objection can lie against it, on the ground of its relation to God's benevolence. Paul did not regard it as lessening the divine benevolence. According to his view of the subject, all Israel would have been cast away, had not God reserved a remnant according to the election of grace.[1] What was true of this nation, is true of all other nations. There are causes, apart from election, which intercept the flow of God's benevolence to sinful men: and election, instead of increasing the obstacles, opens the channel in which the mercy of God can flow, to bless and save the lost.

Obj. 7. The doctrine of election, by teaching that God has reprobated a part of the human race to hopeless misery, represents him as an unamiable being.

Sinful men are indeed reprobated, not by the election of grace, but by the justice of God; but their reprobation is not hopeless, so long as the gospel of salvation sounds in their ears. But the only hope on which they are authorized to lay hold, springs from the electing love of God. Instead of covering men's prospects with the blackness of darkness, the doctrine of election sends a ray of hope, the only possible ray, to enlighten the gloom.

The justice of God will hereafter doom the finally impenitent, as it has already doomed the fallen angels, to hopeless misery. The unamiable feature, which the objection we are considering finds in the divine character, is the justice so horrible to the workers of iniquity. The election of grace, if it wholly annihilated the justice of God, would receive the praises of unconverted men; but it cannot do this. The infinite benevolence of God cannot do this. If men will pronounce the character of God unamiable, because he is just, and dooms sinful beings to hopeless misery, they prove thereby that they do not love the God whom the Scriptures reveal, and by whom they are to be judged. Their quarrel with the

[1] Rom. xi. 2–5.

doctrine of election is, in truth, a quarrel with the justice of God, from which that election has not delivered them.

Of the laborers in the vineyard, who received every man his penny, they who had borne the heat and burden of the day, complained that those who had labored but one hour, received equal wages with them. The occasion for this complaint would not have existed, if no one had received more than was due to him, in strict justice, according to the amount of service rendered. So, if all grace were withheld from the human race, and every one received from God what his deeds in strict justice deserve, no occasion would exist for the objection which is urged against God's election. But, would men be better off? or would God be more amiable? The lord in the parable met the objection thus: "Friend, I do thee no wrong. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"[1] We are taught hereby how to silence objections to the sovereignty of divine grace. While God does wrong to no man, though he does as he will with his own, it becomes us to bow to his sovereignty, and acknowledge him infinitely amiable in all his perfections.

Not content with the God whom the Bible reveals, and who does according to his pleasure in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, we carve out to ourselves a deity more amiable, in our view, than he. If we dare not strip him of his justice, and secure thereby the salvation of all men, we endeavor to devise for him a method of salvation less exposed to human cavil. We aim to free him from the responsibility of determining who shall be saved; and we form the plan, and fix the terms of salvation, with the design of rendering the result contingent on the actions of men. Our method of grace, we admit, will not secure the salvation of all men. If the infinitely wise God should adopt it, he would foreknow all its results, and precisely how many persons, and what persons, would finally be saved by it. Now, if he should make our plan his own, with this foreknowledge of its results, it would then be his plan, fixing as definitely the salvation of those who will be saved, as the plan on which he at present proceeds, and equally leaving the residue of mankind to the awful doom to which his justice will consign them. Our preferred plan

[1] Matt. xx. 13, 15.

may accord better with the views of finite worms, like ourselves, who know not the end from the beginning; but if God should adopt it, he would be responsible for it, in all its workings, to the final issue: responsible, though not to any other being, yet to himself; for his acts must accord with his perfections, and must receive his own approbation. In selecting his present plan, he has chosen it with a full knowledge of all its results. As the plan is his chosen plan, so the people whom it will save are his chosen people. We must prove that our plan would be better, before we can maintain that the deity of our imagination would be more amiable than the God of the Bible.

Every proposed method of salvation that leaves the issue dependent on human volition, is defective. It has been always found, that men *will* not come to Christ for life. The gospel is preached to every creature; but all, with one consent, ask to be excused. The will of men must be changed; and this change the will itself cannot effect. Divine grace must here interpose. Unless God work in the sinner to will and to do, salvation is impossible. God knows the force of opposition which his grace will encounter in each heart, and the amount of spiritual influence necessary to overcome it. He gives or withholds that influence at his pleasure. He has his own rule of acting in this matter—a rule infinitely wise and good. With full knowledge how his rule will affect every particular case, he perseveres in acting according to it, however men may cavil: and the rule which infinite wisdom adopts must be the best; nor can it be any objection to it, that infinite wisdom knows perfectly its final result.

Obj. 8. The doctrine of election does not recommend itself to the general acceptance of mankind; but is received only by those who believe themselves to be in the number of the elect; and who are therefore interested judges.

The truth or falsehood of a religious doctrine cannot be determined by the acceptance which it obtains among men. What God says, is true, whether men receive or reject it. The gospel, which is preached on the authority of God's truth, is rejected by a large part of mankind; and those who do receive it are exposed to the charge of being interested judges, because they expect God's blessing through their belief of it. All that the objection says of election is true of the gospel. It does not prove the gospel untrue;

and it ought not, in the least degree, to impair and weaken our faith in the doctrine of election.

According to God's method of grace, as revealed in his holy word, the salvation of men is made dependent on their belief of the gospel. It is a test of genuine faith, that it cordially receives those parts of divine truth which are least acceptable to the carnal heart. Hence it arises, that the doctrine of election, or, which is the same thing, of God's sovereignty in the bestowment of his grace, often becomes the point at which a sinner's submission to God is tested. When this doctrine is cordially received, the sinner's rebellion against God ceases. When he yields to the sovereignty of God in bestowing eternal life at his pleasure, he admits that sovereignty in everything else. How much soever he may permit the monarch of the universe to do what he pleases in smaller matters, if he refuses to yield to his sovereignty in the matter of highest importance, his submission to God is partial, and the spirit of rebellion has not departed.

Many examples of Christian experience might be adduced, in which a submission to God's sovereignty in bestowing the blessings of grace, became the deciding point of a sinner's acceptance of Christ.

Though the objection which we have considered contains no valid argument against the doctrine of election, it may suggest an important lesson to those who admit this doctrine into their creed. If men, as interested judges, decide in favor of the doctrine, and regard it with pleasure merely because they suppose themselves to be among the favorites of heaven, their faith will be unavailing. No submission to God is implied in our approving of his supposed favoritism toward us. The gospel calls on every sinner to give himself up, through Christ, into the hands of his offended sovereign; and to do this as a guilty creature, and not as a supposed favorite of Heaven. In this complete surrender, the heart becomes fully reconciled to the doctrine of election.

Section II.—PARTICULAR REDEMPTION.

THE SON OF GOD GAVE HIS LIFE TO REDEEM THOSE WHO WERE GIVEN TO HIM BY THE FATHER IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.[1]

The Scriptures teach that the Son of God, in coming into the world and laying down his life, had the salvation of a peculiar people in view: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."[2] "The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."[3] "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church."[4] The Scriptures also teach that the expectation of the Redeemer will be fully realized, and that not one of all whom the Father gave him will fail to be saved: "He shall see his seed. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."[5] "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."[6] "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."[7]

And finally, when all shall be congregated, he will say, "Behold, I, and the children which God has given me."[8] In presenting to the Father all who had been given to him, in the covenant of grace, to be redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, nation, and people, the Saviour will have the full reward of his obedience unto death.

Redemption will not be universal in its consummation; for the redeemed will be *out of* every kindred, tongue, nation, and people;[9] and therefore cannot include all in any of these divisions of mankind. And redemption cannot have been universal in its purpose; otherwise the purpose will fail to be accomplished, and all, for which the work of redemption was undertaken, will not be effected.

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[1] Eph. v. 25–27; Tit. ii. 14; John x. 11; Rev. i. 5, 6; Acts xx. 28; Heb. x. 14; Isaiah liii. 5, 11.

[2] Matt. i. 21. [3] John x. 11. [4] Eph. v. 25–27.

[5] Isaiah liii. 10, 11. [6] John vi. 37, 39. [7] John xvii. 24.

[8] Heb. ii. 13. [9] Rev. v. 9.

Besides God's will of purpose, we have seen that he has a will of precept. According to the latter, he commands all men everywhere to repent; he requires all to believe in Jesus Christ; and it is his will that all men should honor the Son. To all who obey his will in these particulars, he gives the promise of eternal life. The precept and the promise are both included in the revealed will of God. It is the revealed will of God that the gospel should be preached to every creature, and that every creature who hears should believe, and that all who believe shall receive life everlasting. The revealed will is the rule of our faith, duty, and hope; and by it those who preach the gospel, and those who hear it, are authorised and bound to regulate every thought and action. In it, Christ is exhibited as the Saviour of the world;[1] the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;[2] and sinners, without exception, are invited and commanded to believe in Christ. As the gospel is preached to all men without distinction, and all are called upon to come to Christ for life; and nothing but man's rejection of the gospel prevents the extension of its blessing to all who hear it; it accords with the design of God's revealed word, to speak of the offices and work of Christ, according to men's obligations respecting them. It must be remembered, however, that the gospel promises its blessings to those only who obey it; and, as the promise, not the precept, is the proper measure of the benefits which it secures, its benefits are limited to particular persons, even when the limitation in its extent does not appear in the language employed. Christ is called the Saviour of the world,[3] the propitiation[4] for the sins of the whole world; and the free gift through him is said to come on all men unto justification of life.[5] These, and other like expressions of Scripture, represent the facts as they would be, on the supposition that all men did their duty. But notwithstanding these general expressions, the revealed will of God secures blessings only to the obedient, and is therefore narrower in its limit than the purpose or secret will of God, which not only provides all needed grace for the obedient, but also, for all the elect, the grace necessary to render them obedient.

The remarks which have been made may suffice to show that

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[1] John iv. 42. [2] Acts iv. 12. [3] John iv. 42.
[4] 1 John ii. 2. [5] Rom. v. 18.

redemption is not universal, in any view which can properly be taken of it. It is particular in its consummation, and in its purpose; and it is equally so in the revelation of it, which is made in the gospel. The general terms "all men," "the whole world," &c., which the Scriptures employ in speaking of its extent, cannot be understood to secure its benefits to the impenitent and unbelieving. According to God's secret will, or will of purpose, redemption is secured by the death of Christ to all the elect; according to his revealed will, it is secured to those only who believe.

The adaptedness of Christ's death to serve as a ground for universal gospel invitations, constitutes it in the view of some persons a universal redemption. But no one can with propriety be said to be redeemed, who does not obtain deliverance, and who never will obtain it. Other persons who maintain the doctrine of particular redemption, distinguish between redemption and atonement, and because of the adaptedness referred to, consider the death of Christ an atonement for the sins of all men; or as an atonement for sin in the abstract. In Rom. v. 11, the only place in the New Testament where the word atonement occurs, the Greek word for which it stands, is the same that is rendered *reconciling—reconciliation*, in other places.[1] The reconciliation is not between God and sin in the abstract, for such a reconciliation is impossible. It is a reconciliation of persons; and such a reconciliation as secures eternal salvation. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."[2] In Paul's view, all those for whom Christ's death made reconciliation or atonement, will certainly be saved; and therefore atonement cannot be universal, unless salvation be universal. It is possible to use the word atonement in such a sense, as to render the question respecting the extent of the atonement one of mere definition: but it is best to use the words of Scripture in the Scripture sense.

In reconciling the vicariousness of Christ's death with the universal call of the gospel, a difficulty arises, which may be stated thus:—

An unrestricted invitation to all who hear the gospel, to come to Christ for life, seems to imply that universal provision has been

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[1] Rom. xi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. [2] Rom. v. 10.

made in him; and in order to the making of universal provision, it appears necessary that he should have borne the sins of all men.

But the supposition that he bore the sins of the whole human race, is attended with much difficulty. Multitudes died in impenitence before he came into the world, and were suffering for their sins in the other world, while he was hanging on the cross. How could he be a substitute for these, and suffer the penalty for their sins, when they were suffering it in their own persons? And if he endured the penalty for the sins of all who have since died, or shall hereafter die in impenitence, how shall they be required to satisfy justice a second time by personal suffering?

For a solution of this difficulty, with which the minds of many have been much perplexed, it has been supposed that the amount of suffering necessary to make an atoning sacrifice, is not increased or lessened by the amount of sin to be atoned for. This hypothesis is entitled to respect, not only because of the relief which it affords the mind, but also because it has recommended itself to the general acceptance of learned and pious men. Nevertheless, like every other hypothesis invented for the removal of difficulty, it should not be made an article of faith, until it has been proved.

In support of the hypothesis, it has been argued that since the wages of sin is death, Christ must have died for a single sin, and he needed only to die, in making atonement for the sins of the whole world.

This argument does not sustain the hypothesis, unless it be assumed that death is the same in every supposable case. But death may be an easy and joyful transition from this world to the world of bliss. Such was not the death of Christ. Death, as the wages of sin, includes more than the mere dissolution of the body: and Christ, in dying for sin, endured an amount of sorrow which was not necessary to mere natural death. In this suffering, the expiatory efficacy of his death chiefly consisted; and we dare not assume that the amount of it must be the same in every supposable case. The sufferings of Christ derive infinite value from his divine nature; but, being endured by his human nature, their amount could not be infinite; hence it is supposable that the amount might have been different in different circumstances. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will, in the last day, be

doomed to the second death, equally with the more guilty inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida: but the anguish attendant will be more intolerable in one case than in the other. Analogy would seem to require, that Christ, suffering for the sins of the whole world, must endure more than if suffering for only one sin.

The advocates of the hypothesis urge, that the atonement is moral, and not commercial; and they object, that the notion of so much suffering for so much sin, degrades it into a mere commercial transaction. According to an illustration before given, if twenty men owe one hundred dollars, commercial justice is satisfied when each man has paid five dollars; but when twenty men have conspired to commit murder, moral justice, or rather distributive justice (for commercial justice is also moral), holds every man guilty of the deed, and as deserving of capital punishment as if he alone had committed the crime. On the same principle, it is maintained, moral justice does not divide the death of Christ into parts, accounting so much for each offence; but regards it as equally sufficient for many offences, as for one; and equally sufficient for the sins of the whole world, as for the sins of the elect.

The argument is not conclusive. It is not true, that the principle of distributive justice repels the notion of so much suffering for so much sin. Justice has its scales in government, as well as in commerce; and an essential part of its administration consists in the apportionment of penalties to crimes. It does not account the stealing of herbs from a neighbor's garden, and the murder of a father, crimes of equal magnitude; and it does not weigh out to them equal penalties. The justice of God has a heavier penalty for Chorazin and Bethsaida, than for Sodom and Gomorrah. Everything of which we have knowledge in the divine administration, instead of exploding the notion of so much suffering for so much sin, tends rather to establish it. The objection that it is commercial, is not well founded. Though justice in government, and justice in commerce, may be distinguished from each other, it does not follow, that whatever may be affirmed of the one, must necessarily be denied of the other. Distributive justice is not that which determines the equality of value, in commodities which are exchanged for each other: but it does not therefore exclude all regard to magnitudes and proportions. In the language of Scrip-

ture, sins are *debts*,[1] the blood of Christ is a *price*,[2] and his people are *bought*.[3] This language is doubtless figurative: but the figures would not be appropriate, if commercial justice, to which the terms *debt*, *price*, *bought*, appertain, did not bear an analogy to the distributive justice which required the sacrifice of Christ.

In the case adduced for illustration, every accomplice in the murder is held guilty of the crime, because every one has the full intention of it. Justice, viewing the crime in the intention, accounts each one guilty, and requires the penalty to be inflicted on him. It does not admit that the punishment of one will be equivalent to the punishment of all: but, in this very case, employs its scales to give to every one his due, and apportions the amount of penalty inflicted, to the amount of crime.

This examination of the argument discovers, that it is not conclusive. If the atonement of Christ excludes all regard to the amount of sin to be expiated, the exclusion does not arise from the abstract principles of distributive justice, as distinguished from commercial, but from something peculiar in the great transaction. No transaction like it with which it may be compared, has ever occurred. The wisdom and justice of God have decided this single case, and have decided it right. Christ did endure just *so much* suffering, as would expiate the sins that were laid on him. What amount of suffering would have been necessary, if he had expiated but one sin, is a question which, so far as we know, has never been decided in the court of heaven. When we confidently decide it, we are in danger of intruding into those things which do not belong to us. If the Holy Scriptures teach us nothing on the subject, we should not seek to be wise above what is written.

The Scriptures, so far as I know, contain no proof of the hypothesis. The best argument in its favor is drawn from Hebrews ix., in which it is taught that, if the sacrifices of the old dispensation had been efficacious, they would not have needed to be repeated. This seems to involve the principle, that an efficacious sacrifice for sin, when once made, will suffice for all sin, however it may be multiplied in all future time; and this principle, if established, establishes the hypothesis before us. But the clause "then would they not have ceased to be offered," may be taken without

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[1] Matt. vi. 12. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Pet. i. 18. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 20.

an interrogative point following, and the argument of Paul will be, that the sacrifices of the Old Testament dispensation, if efficacious, would have continued to be offered from year to year, making atonement for the sins of each year as it passed, and would not have been superseded by another covenant, as the Lord had foretold by his prophet. So interpreted, the argument of Paul, instead of establishing the hypothesis, subverts it. But if the clause be read with the interrogative point, it may still be understood to refer to the remembrance from year to year continually of the *same sins*, that had once been atoned for. When the sins of one year had been atoned for, why should the very same sins be brought into remembrance the second, third, and fourth years, and the offering for them repeated, if the first offering had been efficacious? So understood, the apostle's argument does not establish the principle involved in the hypothesis.

If, after a thorough examination of the hypothesis, we should, instead of making it an article of faith, be inclined to abandon it; and if the difficulty which it was invented to remove should perplex us; we may obtain relief, as we are compelled to do in other cases, by receiving the whole of God's truth on his authority, even though the harmony of its parts is not apparent to our weak understandings. In this way, theological difficulties furnish an opportunity for the exercise of confidence in the divine veracity: and our state of mind is never better or safer than when, in simple faith, we take God at his word.

So far as we have the means of judging, the sufferings of Christ, when viewed apart from the purpose of God respecting them, were in themselves as well adapted to satisfy for the sins of Judas as of Peter. But we cannot affirm this of every act which Christ performed in his priestly office. His intercessions for Peter were particular and efficacious; and these, as a part of his priestly work, may be included with his sufferings, as constituting with them the perfect and acceptable offering which he, as the great High Priest, makes for his people. The atonement or reconciliation which results, must be as particular as the intercessions by which it is procured.

Some have maintained that, if the atonement of Christ is not general, no sinner can be under obligation to believe in Christ,

until he is assured that he is one of the elect. This implies that no sinner is bound to believe what God says, unless he knows that God designs to save him. God declares that there is no salvation, except through Christ; and every sinner is bound to believe this truth. If it were revealed from heaven, that but one sinner, of all our fallen race, shall be saved by Christ, the obligation to believe that there is no salvation out of Christ, would remain the same. Every sinner, to whom the revelation would be made, would be bound to look to Christ as his only possible hope, and commit himself to that sovereign mercy by which some one of the justly condemned race would be saved. The abundant mercy of our God will not be confined to the salvation of a single sinner; but it will bring many sons to glory through the sufferings of Jesus, the Captain of our salvation. Yet every sinner, who trusts in Christ for salvation, is bound to commit himself, unreservedly, to the sovereign mercy of God. If he requires some previous assurance that he is in the number of the elect, he does not surrender himself to God, as a guilty sinner ought. The gospel brings every sinner prostrate at the feet of the Great Sovereign, hoping for mercy at his will, and in his way: and the gospel is perverted when any terms short of this are offered to the offender. With this universal call to absolute and unconditional surrender to God's sovereignty, the doctrine of particular redemption exactly harmonizes.

Section III.—EFFECTUAL CALLING.

The Holy Spirit effectually calls all the elect to repent and believe.[1]

The gospel calls all who hear it to repent and believe. This call proceeds from the Holy Spirit, who qualifies the ministers of the gospel for their work, and gives them the written word. But men resist and disobey this call of the Spirit, and remain under condemnation. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." "Which of the prophets have not your

[1] John vi. 37; Rom. viii. 26, 30; 1 Cor. i. 24; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 9; Jude 1, 2; 1 Cor. ii. 4; 1 Thess. i. 4–6.

fathers persecuted?"[1] "He shall be revealed, taking vengeance on all them that obey not the gospel."[2]

Besides the call which is external, and often ineffectual, there is another, which is internal and effectual. This always produces repentance and faith, and therefore secures salvation. The former external call is intended in such passages of Scripture as the following: "Because I have called, and ye refused."[3] "Many be called, but few chosen."[4] The internal and effectual call is designed in the following passages: "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling."[5] "Whom he predestinated, them he also called; whom he called, them he also justified."[6] "Called to be saints."[7] "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ."[8] "To them who love God, who are the called according to his purpose."[9] It is not true of all who receive the external call, that they are predestinated to life, justified and saved. Whenever these blessings are represented as belonging to the called, the internal and effectual call must be meant.

We have before distinguished between the direct and the indirect influence of the Holy Spirit. The external call being by means of the written or preached word, belongs to the indirect influence of the Spirit. To render this call effectual, the direct influence is superadded; and the gospel is then said to come, not in word only,[10] but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power.[11] The external call is disobeyed, because men will not come to Christ that they may have life: the internal call operates on the will itself, working in men to *will* and to do, and rendering God's people *willing* in the day of his power. As distinguished from the external call, the internal is always unresisted. In the process of conversion, the Holy Spirit is violently resisted; but this resistance is directed against the outward means. The internal grace softens and subdues the heart, and brings it into peaceful subjection to the gospel of Christ.

The internal grace, which renders the outward call effectual, is the grace of regeneration. Hence regeneration, considered as the

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[1] Acts vii. 51, 52.
[2] 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.
[3] Prov. i. 24.
[4] Matt. xx. 16.
[5] 2 Tim. i. 9.
[6] Rom. viii. 30.
[7] Rom. i. 7.
[8] Rom. i. 6.
[9] Rom. viii. 28.
[10] 1 Thess. i. 5.
[11] 1 Cor. ii. 4.

work of the Holy Spirit, is the same as effectual calling; considered as the change of the sinner's heart, it is the effect of this calling. The calling is effectual, because it produces regeneration in the subject on whom it operates.

In effectual calling, the Holy Spirit displays his omnipotence. "We believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead."[1] The same power which created the world, and said, "Let there be light, and there was light," is needed in the new creation of the sinner. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts."[2] "We are his workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works."[3] "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."[4] His power in creating the world was unresisted; and equally unresisted is the power by which he new-creates the heart. The outward means which the Spirit sends may be resisted; but when the Spirit himself comes in the omnipotence of his grace, resistance vanishes.

In effectual calling, the Holy Spirit acts as a sovereign. In bestowing the various gifts which he conferred on the ancient Christians, he acted as a sovereign: "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."[5] He is equally sovereign in giving regenerating grace. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."[6] Grace is sovereign in election by the Father, redemption by the Son, and effectual calling by the Holy Spirit. The discrimination which grace makes among the children of men, first appears in effectual calling. This work of the Holy Spirit leads up, through the redemption of Jesus Christ, to God the Father, to whose electing love we are taught to ascribe all the blessings of eternal salvation. In this reverse order we look back, along the stream of mercy, to the fountain from which it flows. This reverse order is observed in the precept, "Make your calling and election sure."[7] Our calling proceeds

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[1] Eph. i. 19, 20. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [3] Eph. ii. 10.
[4] 2 Pet. i. 3. [5] 1 Cor. xii. 11. [6] James i. 18.
[7] 2 Pet. i. 10.

from our election; but we ascertain our election by first ascertaining our calling.

In effectual calling, the Holy Spirit operates on the elect. These are "sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called."[1] They whom the Spirit calls are "chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world."[2] "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."[3] The Spirit's effectual calling fulfils the word of Christ, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me."[4] "Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring."[5]

It has been asked, for what purpose does God send his outward call to the non-elect, since it will be ineffectual, unless accompanied with his omnipotent grace. We might as well ask for what purpose does God give men his law, when they will not obey it; or why does he institute a moral government over them, when they will not submit to it. Instead of demanding God's reasons for what he does, it becomes every man rather to inquire, what reason he can render to God, for violating his holy law, and rejecting the call of his gospel. We may be sure that God will do right, and will be able to vindicate his ways before the intelligent universe; and we should regard our propensity to call in question the wisdom and righteousness of his procedure, as an alarming evidence of our want of submission to his will.

Objection. If repentance and faith are gifts of grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit in effectual calling, men on whom this grace is not conferred, are not blameworthy for being impenitent and unbelieving.

The objection virtually assumes, that men are under no obligation to serve God further than they please; or that if their unwillingness to serve him can be overcome by nothing less than omnipotent grace, it excuses their disobedience. Let the man who makes to himself this apology for his impenitence and unbelief, consider well, with what face he can present his plea before the great Judge. "I did not serve God, because I was wholly unwilling to serve him; and so exceedingly unwilling that nothing less

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[1] Jude 1. [2] Eph. i. 4–13 [3] Acts xiii. 48.
[4] John vi. 37. [5] John x. 16.

than omnipotent grace could reconcile me to the hated service." Who will dare offer this plea on the great day?

The efficacious grace which renders the gospel successful, is the grand peculiarity of the gospel dispensation.

This grace was bestowed in a smaller measure, before the coming of Christ, and during his personal ministry; but the abundant outpouring of it was reserved for the Pentecost that followed the Saviour's ascension, and the times succeeding. The apostles were commanded to remain in Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high, and the power of the Holy Spirit which fell on them rendered their preaching far more successful than the ministry of Christ himself had been. Had God bound himself, by rule, to give an equal measure of grace to every human being, and to leave the result to the unaided volitions of men, the extraordinary success which marked the first period of Christianity would not have existed. It must be ascribed to the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit, whom the Saviour promised to send after he should go to the Father. To the power of the Spirit, the success of the word, in all ages, must be attributed: and the glorious millennial day so long expected by the church will not come, until the Spirit be poured out from on high.[1] Hence, all good men looking forward to this glorious day, have not relied for its coming on the superior morality and religious tendency of future generations, but have prayed for it and have hoped for success, only through the abundant influence of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION.

Our Saviour frequently rebuked those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. This self-righteous temper prevailed in the sect of the Pharisees; and Paul, who was a Pharisee, was obliged to renounce it, when he became a follower of Christ. He then prayed to be found, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. In

[1] Isaiah xxxii. 15.

his strong desire and earnest prayer for the salvation of his countrymen, the Jews, he regarded it as their great and fatal error, that, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, they went about to establish their own righteousness."

Self-righteousness is offensive to God. The king, in the parable, was displeased, because one of the guests appeared at the marriage, not having on a wedding garment. But when we array ourselves in our own righteousness of filthy rags, and present ourselves in the assembly of the saints, before the God of holiness, and claim his approbation and smile, because we are thus arrayed, we offer insult to the King Supreme. We evince that we have no right appreciation of his holiness and justice: and while we profess to honor him as God, we so degrade his moral perfections as to make him altogether such an one as ourselves. This temper of mind rejects the mediation and righteousness of Christ, and thereby sets at nought the counsel of God, in the great scheme of salvation. The Father is well pleased with the Son, for his righteousness' sake; and he cannot be well pleased with those who despise that righteousness, and choose to appear in their own.

Self-righteousness is ruinous to the soul. It may be highly esteemed among men; for the Pharisees, who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, obtained their reward, in being honored for their great sanctity. But God searches the heart, and in his view the outward sanctity avails nothing, while all within is rottenness. Yet the disguise cheats mankind, and cheats him who wears it. Blindly and stupidly trusting to his own righteousness, he is at ease, and cries Peace, Peace, until sudden destruction comes upon him. It is one of Satan's most successful artifices, to lull men to sleep in their own righteousness. Many who have been alarmed by a view of their outward sins, have reformed their lives; and, relying on their morality, have, without any heart-religion, without any true faith in Christ, fatally dreamed their life away in the vain hope that all will be well at last. So difficult is it to rouse men from this delusion, that publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of heaven before the self-righteous Pharisees.[1]

The doctrine of grace is the remedy for self-righteousness. It

[1] Matt. xxi. 31.

is a remedy which the unholy heart greatly dislikes, but if once received, it proves an effectual antidote to the evil. It slays all self-dependence, and lays the guilty sinner prostrate at the feet of mercy. He turns from his own righteousness, as from his sins, with loathing and abhorrence, and pleads, and trusts, and hopes for mercy only for the sake of Christ. In this method of salvation there is no compromise with the self-righteous spirit; no reliance is admitted either on absolute merit, or on comparative merit. Every one is required to come to Christ, as most guilty and vile, and to seek mercy as the chief of sinners. He must bring no plea that he is more worthy, or less unworthy than his neighbor. So long as he relies on such a plea, the door of mercy is shut against him. He is taught to receive salvation as a free gift, absolutely free, without money and without price.

The doctrine of grace completely excludes all human boasting This was Paul's view of it. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Works? Nay, but by the law of faith."[1] Its tendency to humble men before God, and teach them to glory in the Lord alone, is an excellence which the inspired apostle highly prized. This endeared the doctrine to him, and should endear it to us. We are prone to think of ourselves above what we ought to think: but we have the means at hand for humbling our pride, in the interrogatory, "Who made thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive?"[2]

This doctrine presents the strongest motive to holiness. It has been charged against it, that it leads to licentiousness; and this charge is as old as the days of the apostles. It was then asked, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"[3] and it was falsely asserted that they taught, "Let us do evil, that good may come."[4] If, in advocating this doctrine, we meet with similar charges, we may rejoice in the proof thus furnished, that we stand on apostolic ground. But the whole charge is without foundation. Men may be self-righteous Pharisees, and, at the same time, live in sin; but when self-righteousness is destroyed by the Spirit of grace, the man becomes dead, not only to the law, but also to sin, and, being dead to sin, he can live no longer therein. Men may, in a

[1] Rom. iii. 27.
[2] 1 Cor. iv. 7.
[3] Rom. vi. 1.
[4] Rom. iii. 8.

self-righteous spirit, abstain from sin, while they love it. But the doctrine of grace, when received into the heart, destroys the very love of sin. A sense of obligation for free and unmerited mercy, occupies the heart, and constrains to holy obedience.

This doctrine is honorable to God. All flesh is humbled before him, and he alone is exalted. The cross of Christ is elevated; and men are attracted to it, and taught to glory in it alone. The full salvation, as it comes forth from the triune God, in its completeness, and perfect adaptedness to our wretched and lost condition, becomes the object of our admiring delight, and calls forth our joyful ascriptions of praise.

This doctrine unites the people of God. All come to Christ on the same level. The rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned the bond, the free; all come to him, without distinction of rank, or of merit. All melt before him into penitence and love, and their hearts become one. Under the full influence of this doctrine, no man can glory in men, or treat with contempt a fellow member of Christ, a weak brother whom Christ has received.

This doctrine prepares us to join the song of the redeemed in heaven. Even here we learn to sing, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory,"[1] and the same shall be our song, when we stand before the throne. "Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God."[2] The celestial harps cannot sound a self-righteous note. It would disturb the heavenly harmony. Every heart feels, and every song declares, that "Salvation is of the Lord."[3]

[1] Ps. cxv. 1. [2] Rev. xix. 1. [3] Jonah ii. 9.

BOOK EIGHTH.

DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE FUTURE WORLD.

INTRODUCTION.

DUTY OF PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE WORLD.[1]

THE people of God have ever been strangers and pilgrims in the earth. Though in the world, they are not of the world; and, both by their professions and their deportment, they declare plainly, that they seek another country, as their final home. Hence, they walk not according to the course of this world, and are deaf to its enticements, and appear to have their eyes fixed on objects that the world sees not. So Moses endured, as seeing him who is invisible.[2] So he turned his back on the pleasures of sin, and the treasures of Egypt, and had respect unto the recompense of the reward, to be obtained in the future world. So patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, have lived for eternity, and have left their testimony to mankind, that they were not of this world, and that their treasure, their hearts, and their final home to which they journeyed, were in heaven. These examples call on us for imitation, and, if we possess the wisdom and spirit by which they were actuated, we too shall make it the business of our lives, to prepare for the future world.

The precepts of revelation call on us to prepare for eternity.

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[1] Amos iv. 12. Prepare to meet thy God.

2 Cor. iv. 18. We look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal.

[2] Heb. xi. 27.

"Prepare to meet thy God." "Set your affections on things above."[1] "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[2] "O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end."[3] All revelation calls as with one voice, as with a voice from heaven, a voice of warning, expostulation, and earnest entreaty, to quit this perishing world, to flee from the wrath to come, to lay hold on eternal life, and to seek a continuing city, an enduring portion, in the world to come. With reference to this future world, every duty is enjoined, every promise made, every motive presented, and he whose eye is not steadfastly fixed on that world, has no reason to hope that he will secure the inheritance of the saints.

Since the motives to holiness, and to diligence in the pursuit of it, are drawn so abundantly from the future world, a knowledge of that world is of great importance to all men. Every man knows that the time of his continuance on earth is short and uncertain; and while fully assured that he must leave this world, and that the time of his departure is just at hand, to make no inquiry concerning the world to which he is going, or to disregard authentic information concerning it, and the means of obtaining happiness there, is folly in the extreme. It is therefore wise to study the doctrine concerning the future world, and to study it as a subject of momentous personal interest. At every step in our progress, we should ask, how does this truth affect my heart? Am I so running as to obtain? Are my prospects clear? Ought I not to renew my diligence, and to seek more earnestly the guidance and help needed, that I may finish my course with joy?

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[1] Col. iii. 2. [2] Matt. vi. 19, 20, 21. [3] Deut. xxxii. 29.

CHAPTER I.

IMMORTALITY AND SEPARATE STATE OF THE SOUL.

WHEN THE HUMAN BODY DIES, THE SOUL, WHICH IS IMMORTAL, CONTINUES TO EXIST IN A SEPARATE STATE.[1]

When the body dies, the atoms of which it consisted are not annihilated; but they separate from each other, and continue to exist in a different state, or in new combinations. The mind, which had previously existed in connection with the body, and had, in that connection, exhibited phenomena, superior to matter, and peculiar to mind, now disappears, and no longer manifests itself as formerly. Though it has disappeared, analogy suggests, that it has not been annihilated. The same philosophy that teaches the indestructibility of the atoms which compose the body, gives its sanction to the doctrine, that the soul is immortal. As the soul is not a compound substance, like the body, it is not susceptible of decomposition, and, therefore, if it continues to exist, it must exist entire, with the properties peculiar to it.

Though philosophy gives its sanction to the doctrine of the soul's immortality, it arrives at the truth through so many perplexing difficulties, that it grasps it finally with but a feeble faith. Plants are bodies of peculiar organization; and are endowed with vitality, either arising from, or connected with, their organization. Brute animals possess organized bodies, endowed with vitality, and, in connection with this vitality, properties are exhibited, which resemble those of the human mind. In surveying the order of beings, from the most imperfect plant, through the rising scale, up to man, the most exalted of animals, philosophy asks, whether man alone is immortal. This question, with which philosophy is embarrassed, natural religion comes in to answer. The moral faculty of

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[1] Luke xvi. 22, 23; xxiii. 43; Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Luke xx. 37, 38; Rev. xiv. 13; Heb. xii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 6, 8; Phil. i. 23; 1 Thess. v. 10; Eccl. xii. 7.

man, and its adaptedness to religion, separate him widely from all other animals, and justify the conclusion that he alone, of all the creatures that inhabit the earth, is destined to immortality.

Philosophy and natural religion have, after all, only an obscure view of this important truth. Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.[1] Divine revelation was needed, to make the truth clear; and that revelation, in the light of the gospel, has so exhibited the truth, that he who does not see it, is wilfully blind. In the dawn of revelation under the former dispensation, so much light was thrown on this truth, that believers of that age regarded themselves as pilgrims and strangers in the earth, and declared plainly that they sought a continuing city, a place of everlasting abode, in another world. But the gospel of Jesus Christ has poured the light of noonday on this momentous truth. The doctrine of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus, have lifted the veil that hid the invisible world from our view, and we are now permitted to look into it, with the full assurance of hope.

When the soul leaves its mortal tenement, we are taught by the Scriptures that it is not companionless. The departing spirit of Lazarus was borne by angels to Abraham's bosom.[2] This discourse of our Saviour concerning the rich man and Lazarus, was designed to give us knowledge of the future world. It is not called a parable, but if we regard it as such, it should be remembered, that the parables of Jesus were not like the fables of Æsop, in which beasts and birds spoke and reasoned, but were representations drawn from nature, and conformed to the existing properties of things. In this view, though we are not obliged to regard the account of the rich man and Lazarus, as the actual history of two individuals, it is such a representation as our divine teacher was pleased to employ, to give us some knowledge of the unseen world. In this representation, the angels, who, according to sacred teaching in which is no parable, are ministering spirits,[3] sent forth to minister to them who are heirs of salvation, are hovering around the despised beggar, in his last suffering, and receiving his released spirit, to bear it to its final happy abode. Death, to the departing saint, is not a journey through a solitary way. He is no sooner separated from earthly friends, than he finds himself in a company

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[1] 2 Tim. i. 10. [2] Luke xvi. 22. [3] Heb. i. 14.

of celestial spirits, who offer themselves as his attendants and guides, to his eternal and blissful home.

Paul has taught us, that believers, who depart from the dissolving tabernacle, when absent from the body, are present with the Lord.[1] The promise made to the dying thief, is fulfilled to every expiring saint: "To-day, thou shall be with me in paradise."[2] More than this, he has promised: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."[3] As the Lord descended on Mount Sinai, with ten thousands of his angels, so he comes with these attendant spirits, to the chamber in which the Christian dies. As he enters the unseen world, he can joyfully exclaim: "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." In company with his blessed Lord, and borne by ministering spirits, the departing saint is conveyed to the mansion which Jesus has prepared for him in the Father's house. Here, he is brought into Abraham's bosom, into intimate communion with the Father of the faithful, and all the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and with all the spirits of just men made perfect.

The paradise to which the departing spirit goes, is not a place distinct from the heaven in which God makes the most glorious manifestation of himself, and in which the glorified body of Christ has been received until the restitution of all things. The idea, that the disembodied spirit has a separate existence in sheol or hades, shut out from the glorious assembly near the throne, has originated from a misinterpretation of Scripture. Sheol or hades means the unseen world into which the spirit enters, when it leaves the body; but nothing is determined, by the use of the term, respecting the place or condition of the departed. The rich man and Lazarus alike went to the unseen world; but the rich man was "in torment," and Lazarus "in Abraham's bosom."

When separated from the body, the soul does not lose the mental powers which belong to it. The power of perception remains: for the rich man, though the eyes of the body were closed and in the grave, lifted up other "eyes" in hell, and saw Abraham afar off. The power of memory remains: for Abraham said: "Son, remember that thou," &c. The capacity of enjoying and suffering remains: for Lazarus was comforted, and the rich man tormented. It

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[1] 2 Cor. v. 8. [2] Luke xxiii. 43. [3] John xiv. 3.

appears, also, from the discourse between Abraham and the rich man, that disembodied spirits not only know each other, but are allowed to hold converse with each other. Doubtless their modes of perceiving, and of communicating with each other, differ widely from ours; and all attempts to understand what is entirely beyond our experience and conception, must necessarily fail. What the Scriptures teach on the subject, is all that we can possibly know; and they explicitly declare that the instruction which they give on the subject, leaves our knowledge imperfect: "We know in part."[1] "We see through a glass darkly."[2]

The Scriptures teach us that the departed spirit of the saint is free from suffering. It no longer groans, being burdened.[3] Lazarus is comforted.[4] Together with freedom from suffering, it enjoys freedom from sin. The spirits of just men, when separated from the bodies in which they groaned, are "made perfect."[5] They are admitted into the high and holy place, where nothing impure can enter.

The souls of the wicked, as well as of the righteous, are immortal, and survive the body. They, too, have their companions; for the devil, by whom they have been led captive, and his angels, with whom they are to suffer everlasting punishment, receive them into their society. Their mental powers and capacities remain, to see heaven and glory at a distance, to remember and bitterly regret their sin against God, and the opportunity of mercy despised, and to endure torments without mitigation, or hope of relief.

Some persons have supposed that departed spirits become angels, and have cited, in proof of this opinion, the words of the angel to John: "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets."[6] They understand that the angel declares himself to be the spirit of one of the ancient prophets. But this is an erroneous interpretation of the passage, which may be correctly interpreted thus: "I am the fellow-servant of thee, and the fellow-servant of thy brethren, the prophets." The angels are spirits, but not human spirits. They were never redeemed by the blood of Christ; and therefore, in their joyful announcement to the shepherds of Bethlehem, they said: "Unto you," not unto us, "is born this day in

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[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 9. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [3] 2 Cor. v. 4.
[4] Luke xvi. 25. [5] Heb. xii. 23. [6] Rev. xix. 10.

the city of David, a Saviour."[1] Hence the song of redemption, when heard in heaven, is described as a *new* song,[2] having never been sung by the angelic choirs. Paul has clearly distinguished between the innumerable company of angels,[3] and "the spirits of just men made perfect," though they are named together, as component parts of the great society into which men are introduced, when they become believers in Christ.

CHAPTER II.

RESURRECTION.

THE BODIES OF ALL WHO DIE, WILL BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD, AND RE-UNITED TO THEIR SPIRITS, FOR THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT DAY.[4]

Philosophy and natural religion may attain to an obscure discovery of the soul's immortality; but we should have remained ignorant concerning the resurrection of the body, if we had not been instructed by divine revelation. From God's book we learn that the body is redeemed,[5] as well as the soul; and that the body shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. That no doubt may remain on the subject, the body which is to be raised again, is described as the corruptible, the vile body, the body deposited in the grave:[6] "This corruptible shall put on incorruption."[7] "Who shall change this vile body."[8] "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."[9] Paul urges not to use the members of the body for sinful purposes, because the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost;[10] and, with reference to the same body he says, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that

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[1] Luke ii. 11. [2] Rev. v. 9. [3] Heb. xii. 22, 23.

[4] John v. 28, 29; Dan. xii. 2; Job xix. 25–27; Ps. xvii. 15; Acts iv. 2; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 8; Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 12–54; 1 Thess. iv. 14–17; Rev. xx. 6, 12, 13.

[5] 1 Cor. vi. 20. [6] John v. 28. [7] 1 Cor. xv. 53.

[8] Phil. iii. 21. [9] John v. 28. [10] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

dwelleth in you."[1] No doubt can remain that the Scriptures teach the resurrection of the mortal body, the body that dies, and enters the grave.

The resurrection of the body is not only taught in the Scriptures, but it is exemplified in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact that he was raised from the dead, is testified by many witnesses, who saw him, and conversed, and ate and drank with him, after his resurrection; and who confirmed the truth of their testimony by astonishing miracles and sufferings. On this grand fact the truth of Christianity depends; and therefore the doctrine of the resurrection is fundamental and vital to the Christian system. If it is not true, Christ is not risen; and, if Christ is not risen, Paul admits "our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain, and we are found false witnesses of God."[2]

As the resurrection is a desirable privilege to the just, only, it is treated of, in some passages of Scripture, as if it appertained to them exclusively: but other passages teach that it will be universal: "There shall be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust."[3] "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."[4] The only exception to its universality will be in the case of those who shall be found alive at Christ's second coming. Concerning these, Paul has taught us that they will undergo a change[5] equivalent to that which they pass through who shall have died and risen again. Their case, therefore, is virtually no exception to the general rule: "It is appointed unto all men once to die."[6] "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."[7]

The power by which the dead are raised, is God's. To the Sadducees, who erred respecting the resurrection, the Saviour said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."[8] It is a work which nothing short of omnipotence could accomplish. The Son of God is represented as the immediate agent, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able

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[1] Rom. viii. 11.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15.
[3] Acts xxiv. 15.
[4] John v. 28, 29.
[5] 1 Cor. xv. 52.
[6] Heb. ix. 27.
[7] 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[8] Matt. xxii. 29.

even to subdue all things unto himself."[1] Even when he was on earth, weak and despised, he claimed this power: "The hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice [the voice of the Son of God], and shall come forth."[2] At his command, who said, "Lazarus, come forth," the dead shall quit their graves, and assemble at his tribunal: and the power which he will manifest, in bringing them before him, will demonstrate his right to judge them.

The resurrection, though it will require the same power that created the world out of nothing, will not be another creation. The glorified body will not be created out of nothing, but will be formed out of the vile and mortal body which the spirit once inhabited: "Who shall *change* our vile body, that it may be fashioned," &c.[3] The same body of Jesus which was nailed to the cross and laid in the tomb, was raised from the dead, and was seen by the disciples ascending from Mount Olivet. It had been transfigured on Mount Tabor, and rendered glorious in the view of the disciples who were present; and now it is crowned with glory and honor, in the presence of all the celestial hosts. It is now the "glorious body," into the likeness of which he will fashion our vile bodies, when he fits them to inhabit the mansions that he has prepared.

How the "vile body" will be changed, we know not. We are under no obligation to suppose that all the gross matter of which it consists, will be included in the glorious body into which it will be fashioned. The corruptible body is perpetually losing, in the daily waste which it undergoes, the atoms of matter which compose it, and having their place supplied by other atoms, received from the nourishment taken in to supply the waste. The nails are pared away, and the hair shorn off; and other growth succeeds, to take the place of that which is lost. The bones, muscles, and all other parts of the body, undergo a change as real, though not so apparent, and as unceasing. The fluid parts of the body change more rapidly; and the solid parts are absorbed and renewed by the deposit of other matter, in the processes of nutrition and assimilation. It is not necessary to suppose that all the matter thus lost, during a life of fourscore years, will be gathered again. The

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[1] Phil. iii. 21. [2] John v. 28. [3] Phil. iii. 21.

identity of the body during life did not imply an identity of the atoms composing it: and much less is an identity of atoms necessary to be preserved, when it is changed into the glorious. Paul's teaching on this point is explicit: "Thou sowest *not that* body that shall be, but bare grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." What is deposited in the ground, is bare grain; but the body which God giveth consists of the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. The body deposited, dies; that is, it is decomposed, and ceases to be the bare grain deposited. Part of its matter is lost, and part enters into the composition of the new plant, and God adds other matter, constructing such a body as pleases him. Such is the illustration which this inspired writer gives of the process by which the dead will be raised; and we are certainly freed by it from the obligation of regarding a philosophical identity of atoms, as necessary to be preserved in the resurrection of the dead.

Yet, let us observe the relation which the glorious body has to the vile body. It is not another body, but the vile body changed. In Paul's illustration, he says: "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."[1] So, every man who rises from the grave, will come forth with his own body. However changed, he will recognise himself, and will be recognised by others, as the same. When wheat, rye, barley, and other grains, are sown in the ground, a grain of each may be deposited in the same bed; and when they spring up together, though all have bodies differing from the bare grain that was sown, they differ also from each other. Every seed has "his own body;" and it may be determined with certainty which is the wheat, which the rye, which the barley, &c. The illustration is doubtless incomplete: but the wisdom of inspiration has given it, to assist our conceptions of this mysterious subject; and our faith, without presuming to be wise above that which is written, should thankfully receive the instruction graciously imparted.

What will be the form and the properties of the glorified body, it is impossible for us to know. Even the beloved disciple who lay on the bosom of Jesus did not claim to know this:—"Beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he

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[1] 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 38.

shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."[1] It ought to satisfy us that we shall be fashioned like the glorious body of Christ. But though this general information ought to be sufficient, the Scriptures, while they do not attempt to describe a glorified body, have given us some information respecting it.

It is incorruptible. Our bodies here undergo perpetual decay and perpetual renewal; and they finally suffer decomposition, and return to dust. The glorified body will suffer no decomposition, no waste, and, therefore, will not need renewal. The process of nutrition by food, and the organs of digestion, will not be needed. "Meats are for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them."[2] The glorified body will be adapted to all the purposes for which it will be used; but, as our mode of life will be entirely different, corresponding changes will be made in the members and organs, to adapt the body to the mode of life into which it enters.

It will be spiritual. Paul affirms this. He says, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."[3] What a spiritual body is, we are unable to say. We shall not be pure or uncompounded spirit, as God is; for we shall have a "body," which God cannot be said to have. But that body will be "spiritual," as distinguished from the natural or grossly material bodies that we now possess. It will be freed from the inactivity, the ponderableness that now binds us to the earth; and will be fitted for swift motion, similar to that of which angelic spirits are capable.

It is immortal. "Now this mortal must put on immortality."[4] As there will be no need to supply a daily waste in each individual body, or to preserve it from corruption, so there will be no need to supply a waste of the race by death. "They neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels."[5] In a state of being so different from the present, we shall need bodies of far different construction and properties; and, from the likeness which we are to bear to the angels, we may infer that our spiritual bodies will resemble, to some extent, the spirituality of these holy and immortal beings.

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[1] 1 John iii. 2. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 13. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 44.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 53. [5] Luke xx. 35, 36.

The true and perfect pattern to which we shall be conformed, is the glorious body of the Redeemer, who, though once dead, now liveth for ever, and who will give us to share his own immortality. "Because I live, ye shall live also."[1]

With what body the wicked will come, and to what likeness they will be conformed, the Scriptures do not tell us. As they will be raised, to stand in the judgment, and receive the sentence under which they will suffer everlasting punishment, in the fire prepared for the devil and his angels; we may conclude that, both in body and spirit, they will be fitted and capacitated for the everlasting endurance of the torments inflicted. We know that their bodies will not be "glorious," for their resurrection will be "unto shame and everlasting contempt."[2] Conjecture, on points which revelation has not enlightened, must be unprofitable.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

IN THE LAST DAY JESUS CHRIST WILL COME TO JUDGE THE WORLD; AND, HAVING ASSEMBLED ALL MEN BEFORE HIM, WILL PASS SENTENCE ON THEM ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.[3]

Natural religion leads us to expect future retribution; and of course some sort of judgment, by which that retribution will be awarded. Even the heathen mythology had its judges, Æacus, Minos, and Rhadamanthus, by whom the dead had their place and condition assigned to them in the other world. But the doctrine of a public, general judgment, is peculiar to revelation. This teaches, that, besides the judgment passed on each individual when he leaves this world, there will be a final judgment, in which all men will stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and receive their final sentence from his lips. "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath

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[1] John xiv. 19. [2] Dan. xii. 2.

[3] Rev. xx. 11, 12; Acts xvii. 30, 31; Eccl. xi. 9; xii. 14; Matt. xii. 36; 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5; 2 Cor. v. 10.

ordained."[1] "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after this the judgment."[2]

As the condition of each soul will be determined, when it leaves the body, another judgment may, to our finite minds, appear to be unnecessary; but the wisdom of God has determined otherwise. All the reasons for this divine appointment, we cannot presume to understand; but we are able to conceive of some important advantages which may arise from a general judgment.

The general judgment will publicly and impressively vindicate the ways of God, in the view of all intelligent beings. The mystery of the divine administration will then be fully unfolded; the wisdom and righteousness of all God's dispensations will then be made apparent; the justice of the sentences then pronounced will be rendered perfectly clear; and, on every creature, as he leaves the tribunal, to go to the place assigned him, an impression will have been made, which will last throughout eternity. It is for the glory of God, that his perfections should thus be displayed, in the view of his intelligent creatures; and the remembrance of this great day will constitute an important element in the happiness or misery to which each individual will be adjudged.

The general judgment will be honorable to Jesus Christ. It is called "the day of Christ;"[3] When Jesus stood, as an arraigned malefactor, before the Jewish council, he claimed, in their presence, to be the Christ, and he referred to this day as the time when his claim would be acknowledged. This will be the day of Christ, the day when every knee shall bow to him,[4] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.[5]

The general judgment will extend to the bodies of men. The previous judgment, at the death of each individual, affects the spirit only. But men are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and it is fit that they should be judged in the body, and especially inasmuch as the body is to participate in the final retribution.

The general judgment will suitably mark the final victory over all God's enemies. Among men, days of triumph have been observed, when wars have terminated, and victory has been attained.

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[1] Acts xvii. 31. [2] Heb. ix. 27. [3] Phil. i. 6; 2 Thess. ii. 2.
[4] Rom. xiv. 11. [5] Phil. ii. 11.

In the great day of the Lord, all the enemies of God will have been subdued; the kingdom, which, as rebels against him, they have seized and claimed, will have been fully restored; and universal peace and order will have been established in Jehovah's empire. At this day of triumph, it is suitable that all creatures should be present, to do honor to the victory, and to him by whom it has been achieved.

The judge on the last day will be Jesus Christ, the same who was condemned at the bar of Caiaphas and of Pilate. How changed the scene! They who then condemned him to death, will now tremble before him, and be condemned by him to death eternal. "The Father has committed all judgment to the Son."[1] The transactions of the great day will form a part of his mediatorial administration. Having undertaken to restore order to God's empire, in which the rebellion of the human race had broken out, and having assumed the office of Mediator for this purpose, it will be proper, in this office, to complete the work; and therefore Christ the Mediator will be the Judge in the last great day: "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."[2]

At the day of judgment Christ will make his second coming. This coming is frequently spoken of in the Holy Scriptures. He instituted the Lord's supper, to be observed until he come.[3] Believers are described as looking for his appearing.[4] As men look for a beloved friend who has gone away, leaving a promise of return; so believers in Christ look for the return of their Lord, who has promised, "I come quickly;"[5] and they pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."[6] He came, formerly, *with* sin; not sin of his own, but the sin of his people, which the Lord laid on him. Having fully expiated this by his death, he will come, the second time, without sin unto salvation."[7] On this great and terrible day, Christ will come to the salvation of his people, and will, at the same time, take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. In a subordinate sense, he is said to come, when he displays his power, either in the deliverance of his people, or in the destruction of his enemies. But all these times are over-

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[1] John v. 22. [2] Rom. xiv. 10. [3] 1 Cor. xi. 26.
[4] Heb. ix. 28. [5] Rev. xxii. 12. [6] Rev. xxii. 20.
[7] Heb. ix. 28.

looked in the computation, when, with reference to his appearing for judgment, it is said, "he will come the *second* time." This will be the great day of deliverance and of wrath. There are other comings mentioned in Scripture, not included in this computation, which are only preparatory and subordinate.

An impression has often prevailed among the followers of Christ, that his second coming was near at hand. This impression, when soberly entertained, has a salutary influence. Compared with the eternity which is to follow, the interval until the day of judgment is exceedingly short; and but a very little part of this short interval is included in the life of any one individual; whose preparation for judgment must be completed before he is called away by death. It is therefore true concerning every one, that the time is short,[1] and that the Judge standeth before the door.[2] But the expectation that Christ's coming will be so hastened as not to leave time for the fulfilment of prophecy, or for the measure of duty and suffering to which he has appointed us, is of injurious tendency. An erroneous impression on this subject had so disquieted the minds of the Thessalonian Christians, that Paul thought it necessary, in his second epistle to them, to free them from its influence: "Be not shaken in mind, or troubled, as that the day of Christ is at hand."[3] It may be that they had mistaken his design, when, in his first epistle to them, he said, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep."[4] They may have understood him to intimate, by his use of the word "we," that he expected to be alive and remain when Christ should appear. He may have used this word as including himself, in interest, in the number of those who will be alive at the second coming; or he may intimate that believers of each successive generation should regard themselves as placed, for the time, on the watch-tower, to look for the coming of Christ, and that, compared with those who had fallen asleep, all who at any time are alive and remain, should regard themselves, though looking for his coming, as having no advantage to prevent [go before, or get the start of] those that are asleep. Whatever may have been Paul's design in using this mode of speech, it is clear, from

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 29.
[2] James v. 9.
[3] 2 Thess. ii. 2.
[4] 1 Thess. iv. 15.

his second epistle, that he did not mean to make the impression that the coming of Christ was so near at hand. He stated explicitly, that the day will not come, "unless there be a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed."[1] It was necessary that time should be allowed for the Romish apostasy. So now, there are various prophecies remaining to be fulfilled; as, the calling of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, and the millennial state of the Church. All these must be accomplished before the coming of Christ; and, while these prophecies remain unfulfilled, believers should not permit themselves to be troubled in mind by those who would persuade them that the end of the world is just at hand.

Some suppose that the coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the righteous dead, will precede the millennium, and that the resurrection of the wicked will be at the end of the thousand years. This opinion, according to which the reign of Christ will be personal, is founded chiefly on Rev. xx. 4, 5: "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." In carefully examining this passage, we may observe that the first resurrection here mentioned does not include all the righteous dead, but only the martyrs; and that it is not a resurrection of their bodies, but of their souls: "I saw the souls of them, and they lived," &c. Making due allowance for the boldly figurative language employed in this prophetical book, we may understand this passage to mean, that generations of holy men will arise, at the time here referred to, who will so much resemble the ancient martyrs in zeal and devotion to the service of God, that it will be as if the souls of these martyrs had returned in new bodies. So Elijah reappeared, in the person of John the Baptist; not literally, but in the figurative sense in which we may interpret the passage before us; which, so understood, teaches a spiritual, and not a personal reign of Christ. It is true that Paul says, "the dead in Christ shall rise first:"[2] but the meaning of this is, that the dead in Christ shall rise before

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 3. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 16.

the living saints shall be changed. The interval, however, he represents to be exceedingly short: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."[1] Whether the wicked dead will be raised at the precise moment at which the righteous dead will be raised, we are not expressly informed; but, from the representations of the scene which are given in the Scriptures, we may infer that one voice, one trumpet will call forth all the dead, and that one hour[2] will suffice for the resurrection of all. In one and the same day,[3] the great day of the Lord, he will be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God; and will come, to be glorified in his saints, and admired of all them that believe.[4]

The place of the final judgment will be on earth. Here Jesus was humbled, condemned, and crucified; and here he will be glorified, and sit in judgment over all the world. When he ascended from the earth, it was foretold that he would return as he had ascended.[5] A cloud received him out of the sight of his disciples,[6] who were gazing after him as he went up; and, on his return, he will be seen coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.[7] A multitude of angels and the spirits of the just will attend him. The bodies of his saints, called forth from their graves, will rise to meet him in the air, and reunited with their spirits, will appear before him. The living saints will be changed and form a part of the company at his right hand. The wicked dead will be raised, and will stand on the left hand of the Judge. On what part of the earth the Saviour may choose to fix the throne of judgment, we are not informed, nor is it a matter of any moment. Why Sinai was selected for the giving of the law, Calvary for the crucifixion, and Olivet for the ascension, we know not. It is enough for us to know, that he will come, and that we must appear before him.

In the description of the great day, contained in the book of Revelation, it is said, that the Judge will be seated on a great white throne, and that the books will be opened; and that another book will be opened, which is the book of life: and the dead will be

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[1] 1 Cor. xv. 52. [2] John v. 25. [3] Acts xvii. 31.
[4] 2 Thess. i. 8–10. [5] Acts i. 11. [6] Acts i. 9.
[7] Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. i. 7.

judged out of the things which are written according to their works.[1] The representation is doubtless figurative, but we may learn from it that the decisions will be made in perfect justice; and that the acquittal of the righteous will be an act of grace. Their names will be found in the Lamb's book of life. They will be accepted in that day, because they belong to Christ, and in proof of their attachment to him, their work and labor of love in his cause, and towards his people, will be brought into remembrance.[2]

In the transactions of this great day, notwithstanding the greatness of the multitude that will be assembled, no individual will feel himself lost in the immense throng, or concealed from the view of the omniscient Judge. Every one will be brought to judgment, as if he were the only creature present, and every one will give account of himself, and receive sentence for himself with as much discrimination and perfection of justice, as if the judge were wholly absorbed in the consideration of his single case. So rapidly do our minds move, even now while bound to our sluggish bodies, that we can review our past history in a few moments, and judge and condemn ourselves before God. With a rapidity beyond our present conception, the deeds, words, and thoughts of our whole lives will pass in review before us on that day, and we shall realize that the eye of God is fixed on each particular with as thorough knowledge of it, as if that deed, word, or thought, were the only one on which he sat in judgment. How can we bear a scrutiny so severe, a knowledge so perfect? How shall we abide a judgment so strict? Who shall be able to stand?

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[1] Rev. xx. 11, 12.

[2] Matt. xxv. 34–40.

CHAPTER IV.

HEAVEN.

THE RIGHTEOUS WILL BE TAKEN TO HEAVEN, AND MADE PERFECTLY HAPPY FOR EVER IN THE PRESENCE AND ENJOYMENT OF GOD.[1]

Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It often happens that the believer in Christ has an afflicted lot in the present world; but, in the midst of tribulations, he is enabled, through grace, to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. So much does the happiness of his present life depend on the hope of a better portion hereafter, that he is said to be "saved by hope."[2] This hope has for its object an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.[3] He is taught by the doctrine of Christ, to look for this portion, not in this world of sin, not in the pursuits and enjoyments of carnal men, but in another and better world, to which his faith and hope are ever directed.

The believer's portion is laid up in heaven.[4] That heaven is a place, and not a mere state of being, we are taught by the words of Christ, who said, "I go to prepare a place for you;"[5] but in what part of universal space this happy place is situated, the Bible does not inform us. It is sometimes called the third heavens,[6] to distinguish it from the atmospheric heaven, in which the fowls of heaven have their habitation, and from the starry heavens, which visibly declare the glory of God. The glory of the third heavens is invisible to mortal eyes; and the place may be far beyond the bounds within which suns and stars shine, and planets revolve. Some have imagined that it is a vast central globe, around which

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[1] Matt. xxv. 34; Luke xii. 32; John xiv. 2; Col. iii. 4; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Luke xxii. 29, 30; Acts xiv. 22; Rev. iii. 21; vii. 15–17; xiv. 4; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4; Matt. xxv. 21; John xvii. 24; Rev. xxi. 4; xxii. 3.

[2] Rom. viii. 24. [3] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. [4] Col. i. 5.

[5] John xiv. 2. [6] 2 Cor. xii. 2.

the stars of heaven are making their slow revolutions, carrying with them their systems of attendant planets. There is something pleasing in this conjecture, which connects astronomical science with the hopes of the Christian: but it must be remembered that it is mere conjecture. No telescope can bring this glorious place within the reach of human view. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."[1] Yet, though science cannot give us a knowledge of this happy world, divine revelation has made us to some extent acquainted with it. Paul adds to the words just cited, "but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit." By faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, we look at things unseen and eternal. The light of revelation brings the glories of the distant land before the eyes of our faith; and in the spiritual enjoyment which we are made to experience, even in this land of exile, we have an earnest[2] and foretaste of heavenly joy. These drops of heaven sent down to worms below, unite with the descriptions found in God's holy word, to give such ideas of heaven as it is possible for us to form; but at best, we know only in part. "It doth not yet appear, what we shall be," or where we shall be, or in what our bliss will consist. But though in looking forward to the inheritance in prospect, we are compelled to see through a glass darkly, we may yet discover that the future happiness of the saints will include the following elements:

1. *An intimate knowledge of God.* Now we know in part, but then we shall know even as we are known.[3] Heaven is "the high and holy place, where God resides, the court of the great King." He says, "heaven is my throne."[4] Though present everywhere throughout his dominions, he manifests himself in a peculiar manner in this bright abode, of which the glory of God and the Lamb are the light. Here the blessed are permitted to *see* God. To see God, as human eyes now see material objects, by means of reflected light, will be as impossible then as it is now, for God is a spirit: but we shall have such a discovery of God, as is most appropriately expressed by the word see; otherwise, the promise

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[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9.
[2] Eph. i. 14.
[3] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[4] Isaiah lxvi. 1.

of Christ would not be fulfilled. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[1] The knowledge of God will be communicated through the Mediator. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."[2] Though God dwells in light which no man can approach unto, and is a Being whom no man hath seen, or can see;[3] yet the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, the same that shines into the hearts of God's people on earth, fills the world of bliss. There no sun or moon shines; but "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The glory of God is the illumination, and the Lamb is the luminary from which it emanates. Jesus will still be our teacher there, and through him we shall acquire our knowledge of the perfections and counsels of God.

Our knowledge of God will be for ever increasing. On earth, believers "grow in the knowledge of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," and the advantages for attaining to higher knowledge, instead of ceasing at death, will be far greater in heaven. The perfections and counsels of the infinite God, will be an exhaustless source of knowledge, a boundless subject of investigation; and the Mediator, the equal of the Father, and his bosom-counsellor, will be our all-sufficient instructor; and our glorified spirits will be fitted to prosecute the study through eternal ages. It follows, that we shall continue to grow in the knowledge of God, while immortality endures.

The angels diligently study the dealings of God with his people on earth, and, by this means, acquire knowledge of God's manifold wisdom. They saw his creative skill and power displayed, when the creation sprang forth from his hand in its unmarred beauty; and they rejoiced in songs and shoutings. They learned the justice of God, when some of their number were driven from heaven for their transgression, and doomed to interminable woe. While the angels have been making the dispensations of God's providence and grace their delightful study, we cannot suppose that the spirits of the just, who are their companions in glory, have been indifferent to these subjects; which interested them so deeply while on earth. It must be, that they continue to make

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[1] Matt. v. 8. [2] John i. 18. [3] 1 Tim. vi. 16.

progress in the knowledge which, while here below, they so earnestly desired to acquire, and in which they made a small beginning. Here, the ways of God appear dark and mysterious, and the doctrine taught us in his word, is attended with difficulties, which our finite minds labor in vain to remove. We desire instruction on these points; and Jesus has said, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."[1] We wait now for the fulfilment of this promise; and we hope hereafter, with the spirits that are before the throne, to drink in the knowledge which we are here so desirous to obtain, which we so greatly long to acquire.

How far the learning of the future world will include the sciences which are taught in the schools on earth, it is of little use to inquire. It will certainly include whatever is necessary to the knowledge of God. We shall study his works, his moral government, and the mysterious scheme of redemption. New truths, of which we have now no conception, will be unfolded to our view; and the truths of which we have now some knowledge, will be exhibited in new relations, and with new attractions. The truths which now appear discordant with each other, will have light thrown on their connecting links; and the whole will be seen, in one grand system of beautiful proportion and perfect harmony, and in everything God will be displayed. All our knowledge will be the knowledge of him.

2. *Perfect conformity to God.* The first man was made in the image of God; and the subjects of regeneration are renewed, after the image of God. But the likeness given in creation has been lost; and that which is reproduced in regeneration is incomplete. God's people are striving and praying for a higher degree of conformity; and they are looking to the future world for the consummation of their wishes: "Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake in thy likeness."[2] They are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son,[3] who is the image of the invisible God.[4] As they study the divine character here, they grow in conformity to it: "We, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the

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[1] John xiii. 7.
[2] Ps. xvii. 15.
[3] Rom. viii. 29.
[4] Col. i. 15.

Spirit of the Lord."[1] The same transforming influence which the knowledge of God exerts in this life, will continue in the future world. As we make progress in the knowledge of God, we advance from glory to glory, in the likeness of God; and this progress will be interminable, through all our immortal existence. We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."[2]

In being conformed to God, who is love, we shall love the display of divine perfection, of which we shall obtain increasing discoveries, in our study of the character, works, and government of God. As our knowledge enlarges, our love to the things learned will become more intense, and the new developments which will be made at every stage of our endless advancement will be increasingly ravishing. What would be subjects of barren speculation to merely intellectual beings, will be to us as moral beings, having a moral likeness to God, sources of ineffable bliss, ever rising higher and higher in its approach towards the perfect and infinite blessedness of God.

3. *A full assurance of divine approbation.* In this world we groan, being burdened. A sense of sin, and God's displeasure on account of it, often fills the mind with gloom. We see, in the gospel of Christ, how God can be just, and the justifier of the believer in Jesus: but our faith is often weak. We are conscious of daily offences against infinite love; and the bitterness of grief possesses the soul. Oh! to see our Father's face, without a cloud between, and to feel that perfect love occupies the full capacity of our hearts, and governs every emotion! We pant after God, the living God. We long for heaven; because there we shall dwell for ever in the light of his countenance. The sentence of the last judgment, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," will give an eternal assurance of divine acceptance, and perfect love in the heart will for ever exclude all fear.

4. *The best possible society.* Paul thus describes this society: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."[3] Our brethren who have gone before us, with some of whom we

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[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [2] 1 John iii. 2. [3] Heb. xii. 22–24.

took sweet counsel here, and went to the house of God in company, are there waiting to welcome our arrival. The angels that attend on us as ministering spirits, during our pilgrimage here, will convey us, when we leave the world, to the glorious abode, in which they ever behold the face of our Father in heaven, and will form part of the happy society into which we shall be introduced. There we shall be with Jesus, the Mediator, who loved us, and gave himself for us, in whose blood we shall have washed our robes, and made them white; there we shall approach to God, the Judge of all, who is our Father, the object of our love, and the source of our joy. In such society we shall spend eternity. We are travelling to our final home, through a desert land, a waste howling wilderness, but we seek a city; and God is not ashamed to be called our God, for he hath prepared for us a city.[1] A city is a place where society abounds. The rich and noble resort to cities, that they may enjoy life. Here they display their wealth, erect magnificent palaces for their residence, and multiply the means of enjoyment to the utmost possible extent. In our eternal home, we shall not be lonely pilgrims; but we shall dwell in the city of our God; where the noblest society will be enjoyed, where the inhabitants will be all rich, made rich through the poverty of Jesus, and all kings and priests to God; and where the King of kings holds his court, and admits all into his glorious presence.

5. *The most delightful employment.* The future happiness of the saints is called a rest: but it is not a rest of inactivity; which, however desired it may sometimes be, by those who inhabit sluggish bodies, is not suited to spiritual beings. The rest resembles the Sabbath, the holy day, in which the people of God now lay aside their worldly cares and toils, and devote the sacred hours to the worship of God. Such a sabbatism remains for the people of God, when the cares and toils of this life shall have ceased for ever. To the glorified saints, inaction would be torture, rather than bliss. Their happiness will not consist of mere passive enjoyment. They will *serve* God day and night; and, in this service, will find their highest enjoyment. They pray now, that his will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven; and when they are themselves taken to heaven, they will delight to do his will, as it is

[1] Heb. xi. 16.

done by all the heavenly host. The worship of God, and the study of his holy word, form a part of the delightful employment of the saints on the earthly Sabbath. So, to worship God with joyful songs of praise and suitable ascriptions of glory, constitutes, according to the Scripture representation, a part of the saints' employment in glory. The subjects of their transporting songs, and rapturous ascriptions of praise and glory, will be supplied by their continually fresh discoveries of the divine perfections, the study of which will also form an important part of their blissful employment.

6. *The absence of everything which could mar their happiness.* Sin, which here pollutes all our joys, will never enter there; for nothing entereth that defileth.[1] Devils and wicked men will be confined in their eternal prison, and will be able to molest no more. The sorrows and afflictions of this world will have passed away. There will be no more sickness, no more curse; and death, the last enemy, will have been destroyed.

7. *A free use of all the means of enjoyment.* Future happiness is promised as a kingdom: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."[2] "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom."[3] A king is superior to all the nobles of his realm, and holds the highest place of dignity in his dominions. Christ, as king, is crowned with glory and honor; and believers also will be exalted to glory, honor, and immortality. The subjects of earthly despots are often deprived of their possessions by the injustice of those who have power over them; but the king is above the reach of such injustice. He commands the resources of his dominions, and makes them contribute to his pleasure. Hence, to minds accustomed to regal government, royalty conveys the idea of the most abundant resources, and the highest measure of undisturbed enjoyment; hence the language of Paul: "Now ye are full; now ye are rich; ye have reigned as kings."[4] In this view, the children of God will be made kings. Besides the honor to which they will be exalted, their enjoyments will be boundless. All the resources of creation will be made tributary to them, and no one will dispute their claim, or hinder

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[1] Rev. xxi. 27.
[2] Luke xii. 32.
[3] Matt xxv. 34.
[4] 1 Cor. iv. 8.

their enjoyment. Earthly crowns are often tarnished by the iniquity of those who wear them, but the crown bestowed on the children of God is a crown of righteousness, not only because it is righteously conferred, but because, without any unrighteous violence, the wearers will have all the honors and enjoyments of royalty secured to them for ever.

CHAPTER V.

HELL.

THE WICKED WILL BE CAST INTO HELL, WHERE THEY WILL SUFFER EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR SINS.[1]

Natural religion teaches the doctrine of future retribution; and even the heathen had their notions of punishment to be endured in another world, for crimes committed in this. Conscience in every man's breast, as the agent of him who placed it there, inflicts torture, often intolerably severe, for iniquities perpetrated, and it teaches the transgressor, when he hears God's voice in the thunder, or beholds any remarkable display of the divine power, to tremble in the apprehension of suffering the wrath of heaven. Though conscience often sleeps, for a long period, over the sinner's guilty deeds, yet some special dispensation of Providence sometimes awakens it, and calls upon it to inflict its tortures. So Joseph's brethren, when brought into difficulties in Egypt, were reminded of their cruelty to their brother, and filled with anguish by the remembrance.[2] But conscience, in some hardened transgressors, sleeps undisturbed, while life lasts; and natural religion, in view of the proofs that a great God reigns, infers that it will be awakened in another life which is to follow. Moreover, in the allotments of the present life, a partial disclosure of God's moral government is made, in the rewarding of virtue, and the punishing of vice; but it

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[1] Ps. ix. 17; Matt. x. 28; xiii. 40–42; xxiii. 29, 33; xxv. 41–43; Mark ix. 43; 2 Thess. i. 7–9; 2 Pet. ii. 4, 9, 10; Jude 7; Rev. xiv. 11; xx. 10, 14, 15; xxi. 8.

[2] Gen. xlii. 21.

is so incomplete, as here seen, that we are compelled to conclude, that, either the Governor of the Universe is not perfectly righteous, or his distribution of rewards and punishments reaches into a future state. Hence, the expectation of future punishment for crimes committed in this life, accords with the dictates of conscience and reason.

But the strongest and most impressive proof of this momentous truth, is furnished by divine revelation. In God's book, the lessons of natural religion are taûght with clearness and force; and the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. From this infallible word, we learn that wicked men treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgments of God.[1] We know that this day of God's wrath will be, when he shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.[2] This day of judgment and wrath will not be in the present life: for "it is appointed to all men once to die, and after this the judgment."[3] "The rich man died, and in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torments."[4] Men will be called from their graves to the judgment; and from the judgment, the wicked will be sentenced to everlasting punishment. God is to be feared, because, beyond the destroying of the body, he can destroy both soul and body in hell.[5] Vain are the dreams of infatuated mortals, who suppose that the only punishment to be endured for sin is in the present life. Conscience and reason unite their voice, to awaken them from their delusion; and revelation depicts the future retribution before their eyes so clearly, that they must see it, unless wilfully and obstinately blind.

The magnitude of the evil included in damnation may be inferred from the importance which the Scriptures attach to salvation. It was a great work which Christ undertook, when he came to seek and to save them that were lost;[6] to save his people from their sins;[7] not to condemn the world, but to save the world;[8] to deliver from the wrath to come.[9] If wrath and damnation had been trivial

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[1] Rom. ii. 5. [2] 2 Thess. i. 8. [3] Heb. ix. 27.
[4] Luke xvi. 23. [5] Matt. x. 28. [6] Luke xix. 10.
[7] Matt. i. 21. [8] John iii. 17. [9] 1 Thess. i. 10.

matters, the sending of God's only son into the world, the laying of our sins upon him, and the whole expedient adopted to deliver us from these inconsiderable evils, would have been unworthy of infinite wisdom. It would not deserve to be called "a great salvation;"[1] and the intelligence of the Saviour's birth, brought by the angels, would not deserve to be called "good tidings of great joy."[2] Paul declared, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;"[3] and Paul was of this mind, because he believed the salvation of a sinner to be a work of vast magnitude. In this view of it, he said: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."[4] In this view, he relinquished every earthly hope, and gave himself to the ministry of the gospel, enduring all hardships and sufferings, if by all means he might save some.[5] Why did he labor thus, why suffer thus, if wrath and damnation are evils of little magnitude? Paul understood the matter otherwise, when he, said, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."[6] It is said in the Scripture, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath."[7] The utmost dread with which any finite mind can regard the wrath of God, will be realized, and more than realized, when that wrath is poured out on him. The power of God's anger, finite intelligence cannot conceive; but God understands it well, and the full estimate of it was regarded, in the deep counsels which devised the scheme of salvation. An almighty Saviour, able to save to the uttermost, was chosen, because salvation was a work requiring such an agent for its accomplishment. The gospel is sent forth into the world, with the declaration of its great Author, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."[8] Every sound of the glorious gospel speaks of salvation and damnation. Every accent of mercy, inviting the sinner to come to Christ for life, is a warning to flee from the wrath to come. Diminutive views of sin, and of the wrath of God due to sin, permit the sinner to sleep in neglect of the great salvation that God has provided.

The human heart is prone to doubt the doctrine of eternal dam-

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[1] Heb. ii. 3. [2] Luke ii. 10. [3] 1 Tim. i. 15.
[4] Rom. x. 1. [5] 1 Cor. ix. 22. [6] 2 Cor. v. 11
[7] Ps. xc. 11. [8] Mark xvi. 16.

nation. The facts reported in the gospel, that Christ came into the world, died, and rose again, are so abundantly attested, that few have the hardihood openly to deny them. These are past facts, which rational men cannot well permit themselves to doubt; but eternal woe is something future, unseen, and unfelt. The apprehension of it disquiets men, and disturbs their enjoyments; and hence they are prone to drive it from them. The threat of indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, is fearful; but if they listen to it, and interpret it in its full import, they cannot remain at ease. Hence arises a criminal and fatal tendency not to take God at his word, in these fearful warnings and denunciations; but to persuade ourselves that they will never be executed. Some relieving method of interpretation is adopted, or some view taken of God's benevolence and mercy, by which the sinner may be permitted to remain at ease, and hope that all will be well. Hence we see the astonishing fact, that multitudes practically neglect the gospel, who dare not openly deny it. If they verily believed that the wrath of God abides on them; that the treasures of wrath are daily increasing, and that the accumulated vengeance is just ready to burst on their heads in a fearful tempest; they would not, they could not remain at ease. To appreciate justly and fully the gospel of eternal salvation, we must believe, thoroughly believe, the doctrine of eternal damnation. All our misgivings, as to the truth of this doctrine, proceed from an evil heart of unbelief; and lead to a neglect of the great salvation.

Some have sought relief, in the apprehension of future misery, from the idea that the language of Scripture, which describes it, is figurative. The descriptions of future happiness in heaven, are figurative; but the figures convey very imperfect ideas of the reality. So it is with the figures which describe future misery. The fire prepared for the devil and his angels;[1] the lake of fire;[2] unquenchable fire;[3] the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched;[4] are terrific descriptions; but they are not exaggerations. They are figures; but they come short of the reality. When God punishes, he punishes as a God. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? What omnipotent wrath can accomplish,

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[1] Matt. xxv. 41.
[2] Rev. xx. 10.
[3] Matt. iii. 12.
[4] Mark ix. 44.

all language fails to describe, and all finite minds are unable to conceive.

Of what elements future misery will consist, we cannot tell; but it will include poignant remorse, and a sense of divine wrath, with the absence of all enjoyment, and of all hope. It will produce, in the subjects of it, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. They will realize that they are shut out for ever from the kingdom of heaven, into outer darkness; and they will remember the good things which they once enjoyed, never more to be enjoyed again; and the opportunities of mercy, once neglected, never more to return. They will be tormented in the flame, without a drop of water to cool their tongues. Their hatred of God will be complete; and they will blaspheme his name, while they feel themselves grasped in the hand of his almighty wrath, without power to extricate themselves. Devils, and wicked men, all under the same condemnation, will be their eternal companions: and the companionship, instead of affording relief, will be an aggravation of their woe. The whole throng, hateful, and hating one another, will be tormentors of one another. The malignant passions, which, on earth, caused wars, assassinations, cruelty, oppression, and every species of injury, will be let loose without restraint to banish peace and brotherhood for ever from the infernal society; and the passions which burn in the hearts of wicked men on earth, and destroy all internal peace, and sometimes drive to suicide, will then be unrestrained, and do their full work of torture; and relief by suicide, or self-annihilation, will be for ever impossible. O, who can endure such torments? Who will not, with every energy, and at every sacrifice, seek to escape from devouring fire and everlasting burnings?

As heaven is a place, so is hell. Judas went to his own place;[1] and the rich man desired that his brethren might not come to this place of torment.[2] In what part of universal space this place is situated, we know not. Heaven is above, and hell beneath; but astronomy has taught us, that, in consequence of the earth's diurnal rotation, the up and down of absolute space is not to be determined by the position of the little ball which we inhabit. If the third heaven, where God resides, be a region of perfect light and

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[1] Acts i. 25. [2] Luke xvi. 28.

glory, beyond the limits within which stars and planets revolve; and if its inhabitants see the sun and stars, as beneath their feet: the region of outer darkness may be in the opposite extreme of space, where sun and stars shine not, and where the glory of God is for ever unseen. But, wherever it is, the broad way that sinners go, leads to it; and they will at length certainly find it.

The duration of future misery will be eternal. This is expressly declared in Scripture. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."[1] The words everlasting and eternal are renderings of the same Greek word, which is applied alike to the future state of the righteous and the wicked. The punishment of these, and the happiness of those, will be of equal duration. Both will be eternal or everlasting. The criticism which would take the word in a different sense, in one case, from that which it is admitted to have in the other, is rash and dangerous. The same truth is taught in other passages of Scripture:—"Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."[2] "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."[3] "Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."[4] The last passage, inasmuch as it refers to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed by fire from heaven, may contain an allusion to that fire; but this, viewed in itself, was not eternal fire. It was a type of future wrath, and may be regarded as its beginning, and first outbursting. The fire which consumed the cities of the plain, has long since ceased to burn; but the wrath due to their guilty inhabitants did not then cease to burn: for the day of judgment will find Sodom and Gomorrah,[5] with guilty Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, all doomed to suffer, according to their several measures of guilt, the vengeance of eternal fire. These cities, in their fearful overthrow, are set forth as an example; and from the visible beginning of their awful doom, we may faintly conceive what will be the end. But it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those who hear and reject the gospel of Christ; who must, therefore, suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, in its fiercest burnings, and in its everlasting duration.

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[1] Matt. xxv. 46. [2] Mark ix. 44. [3] Rev. xiv. 11.
[4] Jude i. 7. [5] Matt. xi. 21.

Future misery will not be purifying in its effect. The afflictions which the righteous endure in this world are fatherly chastisements, inflicted in love, and God designs them for the profit of his children, that they may be partakers of his holiness.[1] Future misery will be inflicted not on the children of God, but on the enemies of God; not in love, but in wrath. And it will not be designed for the profit of its subjects, but for the vindication of the law and justice of God, "to show his wrath and make his power known."[2] Affliction purifies the righteous, not by any inherent tendency which it possesses, but by the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit. The wicked, even in the present life, grow hardened under affliction, and sometimes blaspheme God, while they gnaw their tongues with pain.[3] In the world to come, the Holy Spirit will send forth no sanctifying influence to render future torments purifying. Many of the wicked he gives up to hardness of heart, even in the present life; and to all of them the day of grace will be past for ever.

The opinion that they will be ultimately restored to the favor of God, and taken to heaven, is not authorized by the Scriptures.[4] On the contrary, it teaches that the Master of the house will "shut the door;" that there is a great gulf[5] between the two worlds, rendering passage from one to the other impossible; that the unjust and filthy will remain unjust and filthy still.[6] Jesus said to some, "Ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go ye cannot come:"[7] and he said concerning Judas Iscariot, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born."[8] The last words cannot be true, if Judas at any future time, however remote, shall be taken to heaven, to enjoy for ever the perfect happiness of that world: for the eternal weight of glory which will then be awarded to him, will far more than outweigh all his previous sufferings. The Scriptures teach that the heavens have received Jesus Christ, "until the restitution of all things:"[9] but if his restitution implied a restoration of all to the favor of God, Christ's second coming would be deferred until its accomplishment. But as Christ will come from heaven to judge the world, and will in

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[1] Heb. xii. 10. [2] Rom. ix. 22. [3] Rev. xvi. 10, 11.
[4] Luke xiii. 25. [5] Luke xvi. 26. [6] Rev. xxii. 11.
[7] John viii. 21. [8] Matt. xxvi. 24. [9] Acts iii. 21.

the judgment, condemn the wicked to everlasting punishment, we must conclude that the restitution of all things will be regarded as complete and for ever fixed; when the final judgment shall have decided the eternal state of all, and the order which had been disturbed by the enemies of God, shall have been fully restored in his kingdom.

Future misery will not be *annihilating* in its effect. It is called death, the second death: but the first death does not imply annihilation of either soul or body; and neither does the second. It is called destruction: but as the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed[1] in the overthrow of those cities, but are nevertheless to appear in the day of judgment,[2] destruction does not imply annihilation. An immortal spirit suffers destruction when it is separated from God and happiness, and doomed to eternal misery. So the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.[3] Besides death and destruction, the word corruption is used as the opposite of life. "They that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, and they that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."[4] Corruption is not annihilation. The death of the body is followed by corruption and the worm; so that we may say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and sister.[5] Hence, corruption, and the worm that dieth not, are figures employed to denote the consequences of the second death. By the flesh, to which men sow, and of which they reap corruption, we do not understand the material body, but the depraved mind. The corruption of this is its moral disorganization, or utter loss of holiness. Were annihilation intended, the worm that dieth not, would cease to have anything on which to feed; and the fire that cannot be quenched, would cease to burn for want of fuel. If the wicked are to be destroyed by instantaneous annihilation, that destruction, instead of being an infliction of torment, will be a termination of all suffering. This does not accord with the Scripture representations of the future portion of the wicked: and no good reason can be assigned for raising the bodies of the wicked, if they are to be immediately annihilated.

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[1] Luke xvii. 29. [2] Matt. x. 15. [3] 2 Thess. i. 9.
[4] Gal. vi 8. [5] Job. xvii. 14.

If destruction is to be a process, whether rapid or lingering, by which annihilation is to be produced, it will not be everlasting destruction, or everlasting punishment; for the process and the punishment will sooner or later cease. To no purpose can it be called eternal punishment, when the subjects of it shall have eternally ceased to exist. To no purpose can any be said to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, when the fire itself shall have eternally terminated their suffering. And to no purpose will the smoke of their torment ascend for ever and ever, when the torments themselves shall have eternally ceased.

Some understand the words, "Every one shall be salted with fire,"[1] to import, that the fire of hell, instead of consuming its victims, will, like salt, preserve them. Whether this be its meaning or not, there is no reason to doubt that the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, will be adapted to the suffering which they will undergo. Instead of wasting away under its influence, or having their powers of endurance benumbed, we may rather conclude, that, as the righteous will perpetually ascend in bliss, the wicked will perpetually sink in woe. Their deep is bottomless,[2] and being banished from the presence of God, they may continue to recede from him for ever. Their capacity for suffering, their tormenting passions, their hatred of God, and of one another, may all increase indefinitely, through eternal ages. As wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever, they will continue to fly further and further from God, the eternal source of light and happiness, into deeper, and still deeper darkness and woe. O, that men would seek the Lord, while he may be found.

Obj. 1. The justice of God does not require, and will not permit, the infliction of eternal torments for the sins committed in the short period of human life. If eternity be divided by the number of sins which any man commits, during the whole course of his probation on earth, the quotient will be eternity: and it follows, that future misery cannot be eternal, unless an eternity of torment be inflicted for every sin. An eternity of woe for one transgression, shocks all the sense of justice which God has implanted in the human breast.

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[1] Mark ix. 49. [2] Rev. xx. 3.

This objection proceeds on the radical mistake, that men cease to be moral agents, bound by the law of God, when they have passed into the world of woe. God's dominion is universal; and the inhabitants of hell are as much bound to love and obey him, as those of heaven or earth. Men who die in their sins, will carry with them not only the guilt accumulated during the present life, but the inclination, confirmed by habit, to continue in sin. They will hate God and blaspheme his name, and their sins cannot cease to be offensive to God, because their moral character has become fixed and unalterable. A sinner cannot become innocent by being confirmed in sin. Were it so, the inhabitants of hell would be innocent beings; their habitation would be as pure as the high and holy place where God dwells; and their blasphemies would be as little offensive to God and all holy beings, as the songs of angels. All this is manifestly absurd. Sin continued, will deserve and provoke continued wrath; and the future condition of the wicked is chiefly terrible, because they are abandoned by God to the full exercise and influence of their unholy passions, and the consequent accumulation of guilt for ever and ever.

If God's justice will not permit him to punish sinners with banishment from his presence, and confinement in the regions of woe, beyond a limited period of time; then it will follow, that when this limited period of suffering shall have passed, justice will not only permit, but will absolutely require, that they should be released. Who can believe that, after a thousand years spent in blaspheming God, and strengthening their enmity to his character and government, they shall be turned loose, to roam at large in God's dominions, and to visit at pleasure the holy and happy place where nothing entereth that defileth?"[1] Who can believe that God's justice will demand this, and will authorize them to demand it? Yet all this will follow, if the ground assumed in the objection be not false.

Obj. 2. God's benevolence will not permit him to inflict such misery on his creatures. He claims them as his offspring, and represents himself as their Father: and, as no human parent would so treat his children, it is not to be supposed that the benevolent Father of all will be so unfeeling and unmerciful.

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[1] Rev. xxi. 27.

This objection, while it claims to honor God's benevolence, dishonors his veracity. Our inferences from God's benevolence may all be mistake; but God's word must be true: and he who, relying on the deductions of his own reason, rejects the warnings that God has graciously given him, will find, in the end, that he has acted most foolishly and wickedly.

The objection assumes what is inconsistent, not only with the truth of God's declarations as to the future, but also with known and undeniable facts of the past and present. Had the objector been present when man came forth in his original purity from the hand of his Maker, he would, on the principle assumed in his objection, have predicted, with confidence, that God would never permit this fair production of his creative power and skill to become involved in the fall and its consequent evils. Had he been present in the garden of Eden, when the serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die," he would, in his professed honor of God's benevolence, have confirmed the declaration made by the father of lies. The misery endured by the human race in every age, from the fall to the present moment, in every region of the globe, in every tribe, in every family, in the daily and hourly experience of every individual, is all inconsistent with the principle assumed in the objection. If, at the creation, it would have denied the possibility of what we know has occurred, how can we trust it when it now denies the possibility of what God says shall be? When our inferences oppose fact, and the truth of God, we may be assured that they are wrong.

When pestilence is desolating a land, God sees the wretchedness that is produced, and hears the cries of the suffering, and could, with one breath, drive far away the cause of the fatal malady. When a ship is wrecked in the raging ocean, God hears the cries of the sinking mariners, and understands well their terror and anguish, and could, without effort, bear the shattered vessel at once to its destined port in safety. Were the objector in God's stead, would he be deaf to the cries of his children? Would he not promptly afford the needed relief? He would. What then? Is he benevolent, and is God unfeeling and unmerciful? So the objection would decide; and we know, therefore, that it is not according to truth.

God is of right the Father of his creatures: but he says, "If I

be a father, where is my honor?"[1] and he complains, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."[2] By their rebellion, men have become the children of the wicked one. Christ said, "If God were your Father, ye would love me;"[3] implying that those whom he addressed were not the children of God. To such men God is not a Father, but an offended and insulted moral Governor. He is benevolent; but his benevolence does not overthrow his moral government. On the contrary, it enforces the claims of justice. To turn loose the guilty, and to permit the lawless to roam at large through his dominions, to disturb the peace and order of his government, and render the obedient unhappy, would not be benevolence. God's benevolence is against the sinner; and when the walls of the infernal prison are broken down, and its guilty inmates are permitted to fill the universe with crime and wretchedness, it will no longer be true that God is love.

In contemplating the awful subject of future misery, and its relation to God's benevolence, our minds may find some relief in regarding the misery as the natural and proper effect of sin. God has so constituted the nature of man, that he feels remorse for crime; and he has so constituted the nature of external things, that drunkenness, and many other sins, produce poverty and suffering. We have not the hardihood to complain that this constitution of things is not benevolent. He who, knowing that fire will burn, voluntarily puts his hand into the flame, has no right to charge God with want of benevolence, because he has made it the nature of fire to burn. Much of future misery may be regarded as the natural effect of sinful passions, tearing the soul by their violence, or of an upbraiding conscience, gnawing within, as the worm that dieth not. "God is a consuming fire," ever present to the workers of iniquity; and his nature must change if his wrath cease to burn against sin. The nature of things, as constituted by God, and as including the nature of God himself, must render the sinner miserable. If he would cease to be miserable, he must escape from himself, and must find another God, and another universe.

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[1] Mal. i. 6. [2] Isaiah i. 2. [3] John viii. 42.

CONCLUSION.

This world is not such a habitation as a wise man would desire to live in for ever. The young and thoughtless expect to find happiness in it; but experience teaches that the expectation is vain and delusive. Disappointment, care, and sorrow form a large part of human life; and as men approach the end of their course, they can adopt the language of the patriarch Jacob: "Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage."[1] This sad experience results from the fact, that God's curse rests on the world, because it is full of sin: and what wise man would wish to live for ever in a habitation that God has cursed?

If this were the only world, it would be well for us to make the best of it: but we have abundant proof that another world exists; and a revelation from it has been made, by which we may learn how to obtain a portion there, that will be full of unmixed happiness, and will endure for ever. We are called on to relinquish our delusive hope of earthly good, and lay hold on the hope set before us, that is sure and certain: to give up our pursuit of the unsatisfying and short-lived pleasures of the present life, and to seek the substantial and eternal joys of the life to come. It is certainly the part of wisdom to obey this call.

Another fact needs to be considered. Whether we will or not, we are compelled to leave this world, and take up our eternal abode in another habitation, either of joy or woe. If we had all possible enjoyment here, it would be but momentary, and would not deserve a thought in comparison with eternal happiness and misery. We are rapidly passing through this world, to our eternal home. Whether, in this lodging place of wayfaring men, our comforts shall be few or many, is a matter of very little moment, and unworthy of anxious care: but it is extreme folly to be unconcerned about the world to which we are hastening, and where our condition will be fixed for ever.

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[1] Gen. xlvii. 9.

There are some things in religion which are hard to be understood, and about which some persons are inclined to be skeptical: but is there any other thing so incredible, as that intelligent and immortal beings should make the things of this fleeting world their chief care, and give themselves no concern about eternity? If the fact were not daily before our eyes, who could believe it? Were the Bible to inform us that there are intelligent immortals in a remote planet who thus act, the skeptic would appear almost excusable who should doubt the truth of the statement; but that book tells us of men, intelligent and immortal men, who are blinded by the god of this world, and led captive by him at his will, and who do not consider their latter end, but rush on to destruction, as the ox goeth to the slaughter. This testimony, than which the Bible contains nothing more incredible, is verified by the whole history of mankind. From this reigning folly even Christian men are but partly delivered. Even they perpetually need the exhortation, "Be not conformed to this world;"[1] and, to preserve them from the fascinating power of "the things seen, which are temporal," they should look habitually at "the things which are unseen and eternal." For this purpose, the doctrine concerning the future world is to them very important. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith:"[2] and faith, being "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,"[3] must lay hold on the realities of the invisible and future world.

The doctrine concerning the future world teaches us to set a proper value on earthly good. If the honors of the world tempt us, let us remember that, in the grave, the king and the meanest of his subjects will lie on the same level, and mingle with the same dust; and that, in the resurrection, the noble of the earth, who have not sought the honor that cometh from God, will rise to shame and everlasting contempt. If the pleasures of the world invite, let us conceive of them as the bait with which Satan would ensnare our souls, and lead them into everlasting torments. If our hearts incline, at any time, to covetousness, let us contemplate the rich man in hell, stripped of all his possessions, and unable to procure a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. So let us keep eter-

[1] Rom. xii. 2. [2] 1 John v. 4. [3] Heb. xi. 1.

nity directly in view; and, in its light, the honors, pleasures, and wealth of this world will lose their lustre, and cease to charm.

This doctrine teaches us how to bear the afflictions of life. The heaviest affliction that can crush the spirit here, is far lighter than the weight of wrath which falls on the wicked in the world to come. Why, then, should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?[1] So long as he still lives, out of torment, out of hell, his suffering, however severe, is inconceivably less than his sins deserve. Moreover, his afflictions, if endured with humble resignation to God, are conducing to his holiness. Though light and momentary, they work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.[2] With eternity in view, the heaviest and most enduring anguish of this life appears light and momentary; and we can rejoice to endure it, because of the glorious effects which it will produce in the eternal world.

This doctrine teaches the value of religion. Learning and talent, agreeable manners and amiable disposition, are all worthy to be prized; but they do not secure eternal blessedness. Religion is the one thing needful, the good part that will never be taken from us.[3] Let sinners despise religion and curl the lip with scorn, when you speak of its claim on their regard: but even they, when eternity is near in prospect, learn the value of what once they despised. With eternity in view, how precious is religion! how precious the Bible which teaches it!

This doctrine endears Christ to believers. He is precious, for what he is in himself; but this preciousness is enhanced by the consideration, that it is he who delivers us from the wrath to come, who is preparing a place for us in the world of bliss, who will come and take us to himself, and for ever lead us to the fountains of living waters, in that land of everflowing delight.

This doctrine consoles us, under the loss of Christian friends. We follow them to the tomb, and our tears flow freely: but we sorrow not as those who have no hope. They are not lost to us, but have only gone home before us; and we are waiting to be sent for, when it shall be the pleasure of our heavenly Father. Our separation from them is short, for we are fast approaching our

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[1] Lam. iii. 39. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 17. [3] Luke x. 42.

journey's end, and then we shall join them again, never more to part.

This doctrine, if received in lively faith, enables the Christian to meet death with joy. When a man repents of sin, and believes in Christ, he is prepared to die safely; but he may nevertheless, through the weakness of his faith, be afraid to die. To meet death without fear, requires strong faith in Christ, as the Saviour of sinners. To meet death with joy, requires strong faith in the doctrine concerning the future world. When we can stand, like Moses on Pisgah's top, and view the good land in all its beauty, our hearts leap forward, with strong desire, to go over Jordan, and possess it. We long to join the happy company, who dwell for ever in the presence of our God. O to be free from sin, as they are;—to behold the face of Jesus, as they do;—to partake of their bliss, and unite in their everlasting hallelujahs!

Reader, what are your prospects in the future world? Have you received the love of the truth, that you may be saved? Does the truth as it is in Jesus enter your heart, with sanctifying power? Are you daily striving, by a holy life, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things?

THE END.

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